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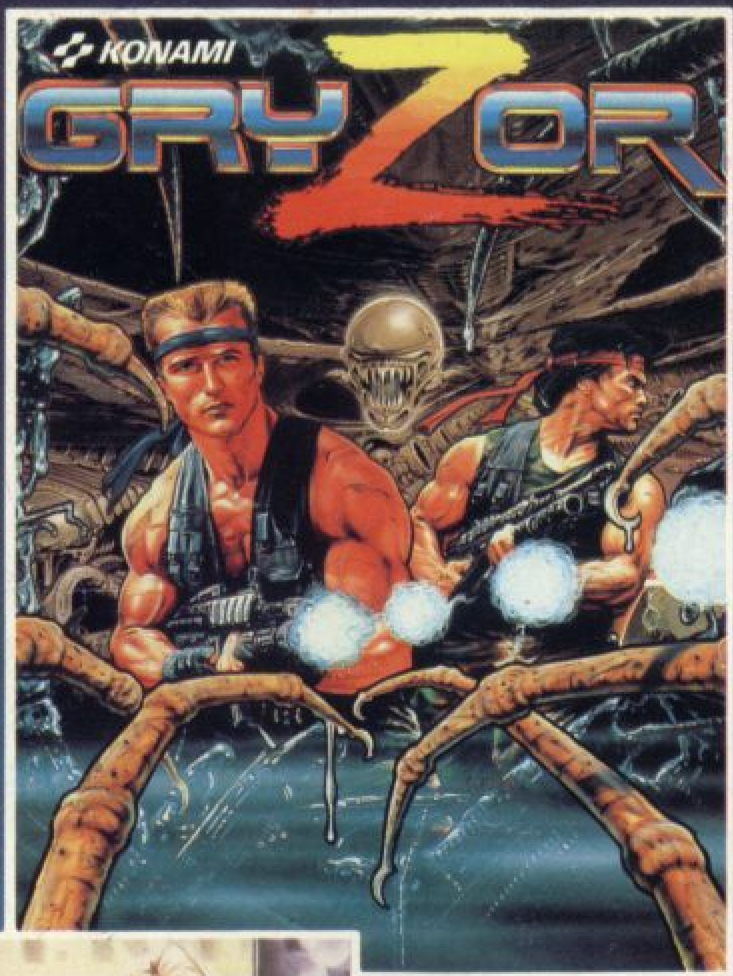


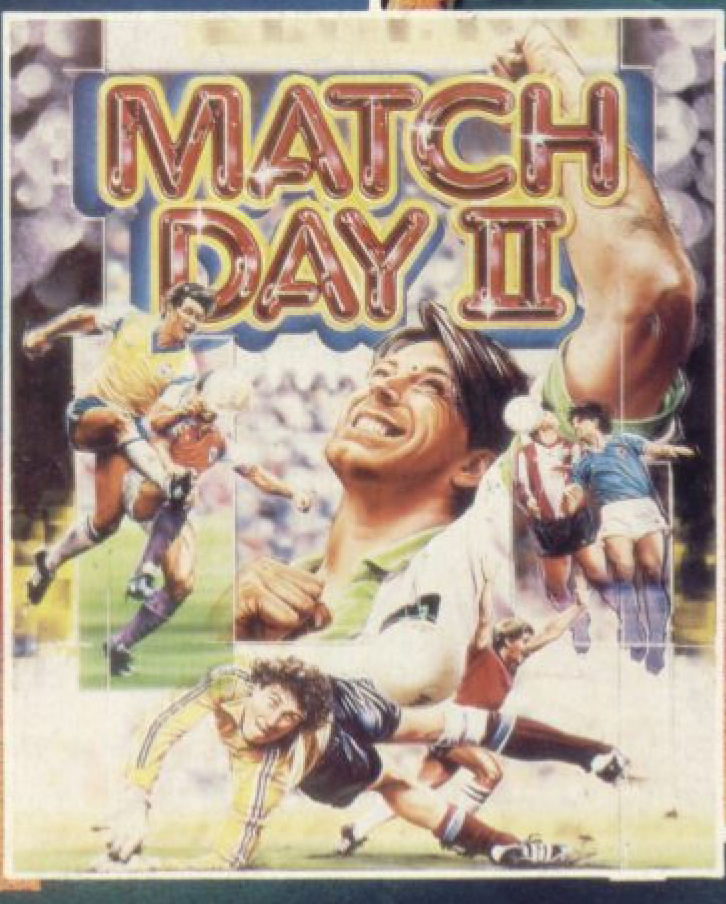
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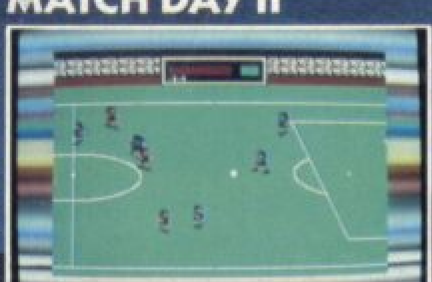
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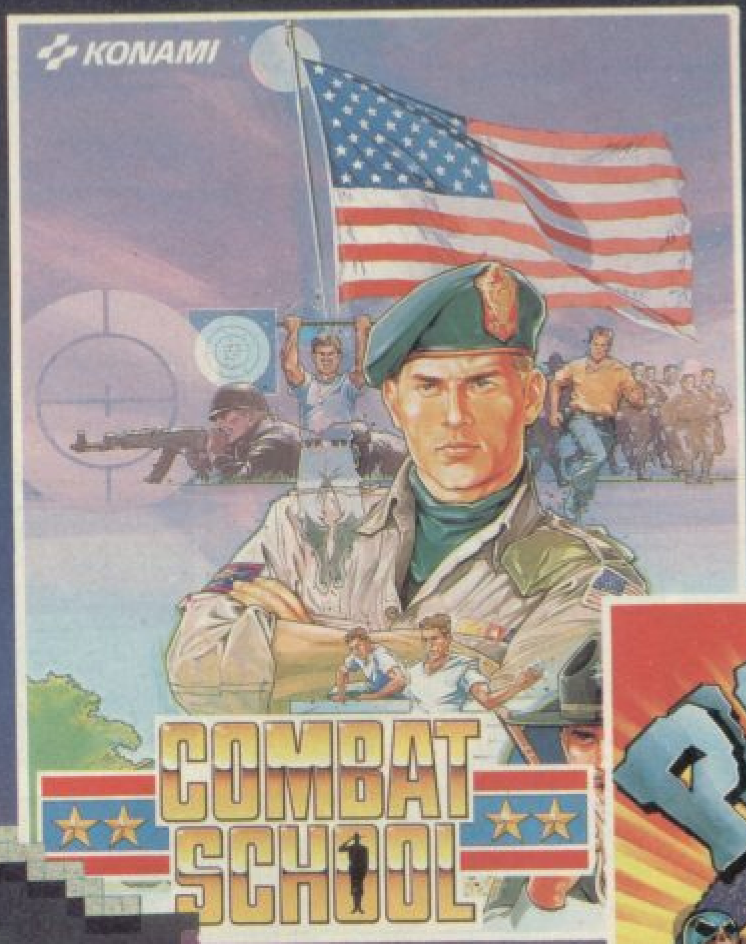
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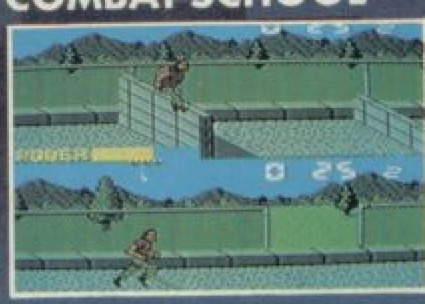
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"The Last Word ..." is the result of a radically different approach to high quality text processing on this popular micro. It brings together a range of features which set it far in advance of any other comparable Spectrum software. If you have purchased an 80 column printer and you're still firmly stuck with a 64 column word processing package — oh boy, do we have some good news for you! Just look at this mouth-watering list —

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- ☆☆ ***148 CHARACTERS LINE LENGTH*** — *if your printer can use it, or less as is required. If you need the margins at 70 left/140 right — it's OK by* **"The Last Word ..."** *— just dial it in and off you go.*
- ☆☆ ***60 PRINT CONTROL TOKENS*** — *in three groups: 24 for direct printer control (five bytes each), 26 to 'include' a$ to z$, and 10 to call down into the 'User Basic' section — during the print-run.*
- ☆☆ ***MAIL MERGE*** — *name and address files are created with the special TLW Data File program, and mail merge documents are selectively printed by a user-set 'criteria' logic process. It's so easy . . .*
- ☆☆ ***A SUPERB CALCULATOR*** — *able to do everything, from little sums to stored expression evaluations. It has 27 scientific functions, 10 dedicated memories and full Basic variables access. Enough?*
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- ☆☆ ***RE-DEFINABLE KEY FACILITY*** — *special program included allows you to re-define 16 keys with new foreign or graphics dedications.*
- ☆☆ ***OVER 60 COMMANDS*** — *including 19 just for cursor movements, a 250 minute timer/alarm, word count, find/exchange, word wrap, block delete, tabbing, paragraph reform, case changes, firm and spill margin marking, colours, insert, centralise, justify/ragged . . .*

"The Last Word ..." is — besides its considerable abilities — a really enjoyable word processor to use. It displays a most practical approach to the essential task of text manipulation, has an extremely useful ability in the number-crunching line, and scores very strongly when it comes to driving your line printer. From A to Z — **"TLW ..."** is a better way to go.

The package comprises a 32 page Instruction and Reference Manual, together with the **"TLW ..."** cassette — including many free Basic and machine-code utilities for extending the programs' usefulness in various other ways. We firmly believe that **"The Last Word ..."** is technically and practically the best word processor that you can buy for your 48/128k Spectrum.

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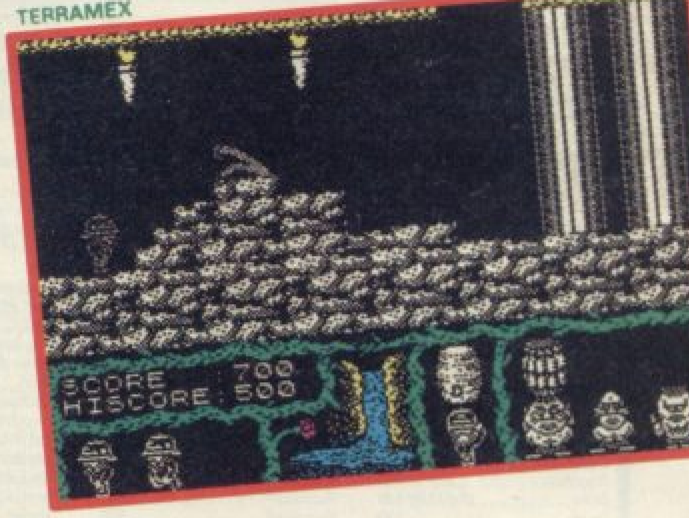
GAMES 88 24

What's new? What's happening? We ask the experts what they think will happen in 88

COVER SMASH 42

Garfield! SU goes gaga over the best cartoon licence ever! Check out the astounding graphics! Read the astounding words! Be pretty astounded in quite a lot of the ways actually!

TERRAMEX

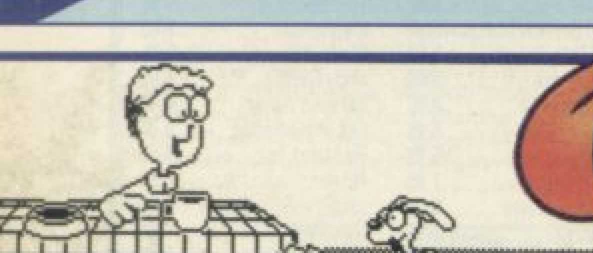




PREVIEWS 93

Despite the fact that almost all the software houses were reduced to drunken giggling over the Christmas Hols and not a word of sense was to be got out of them the Jim 'n' Tammy previews roadshow brings you lots and lots of completely fabulous pics and news of the very latest games







ENTS

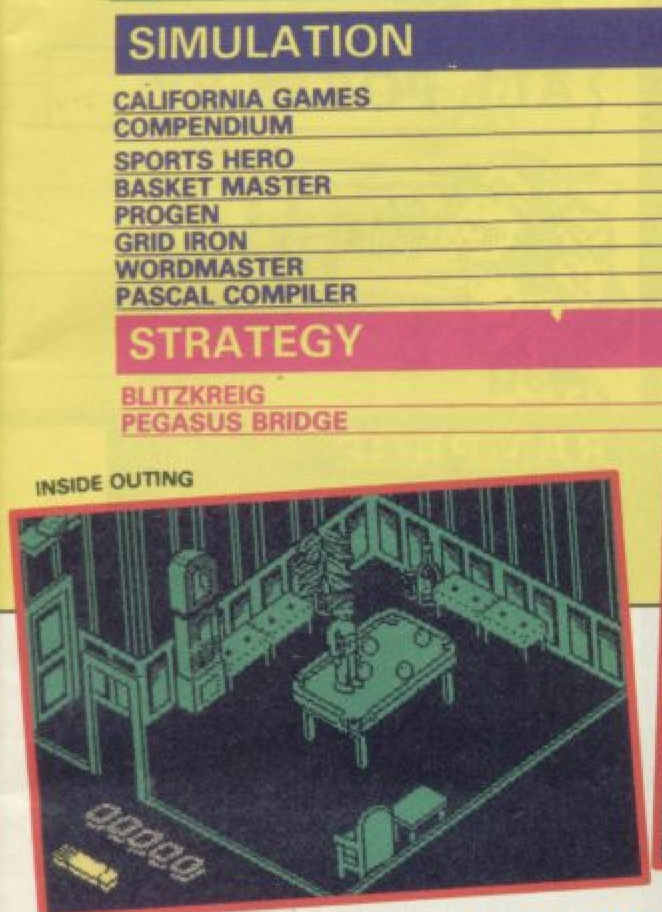
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ADVENTURE

SIMULATION

STRATEGY

INSIDE OUTING



ENLIGHTNEMENT



FEATURES

A complete list of everything currently available on Disc for the +3 with ratings for the lot. We don't mess around. You got a +3? You gotta read this!

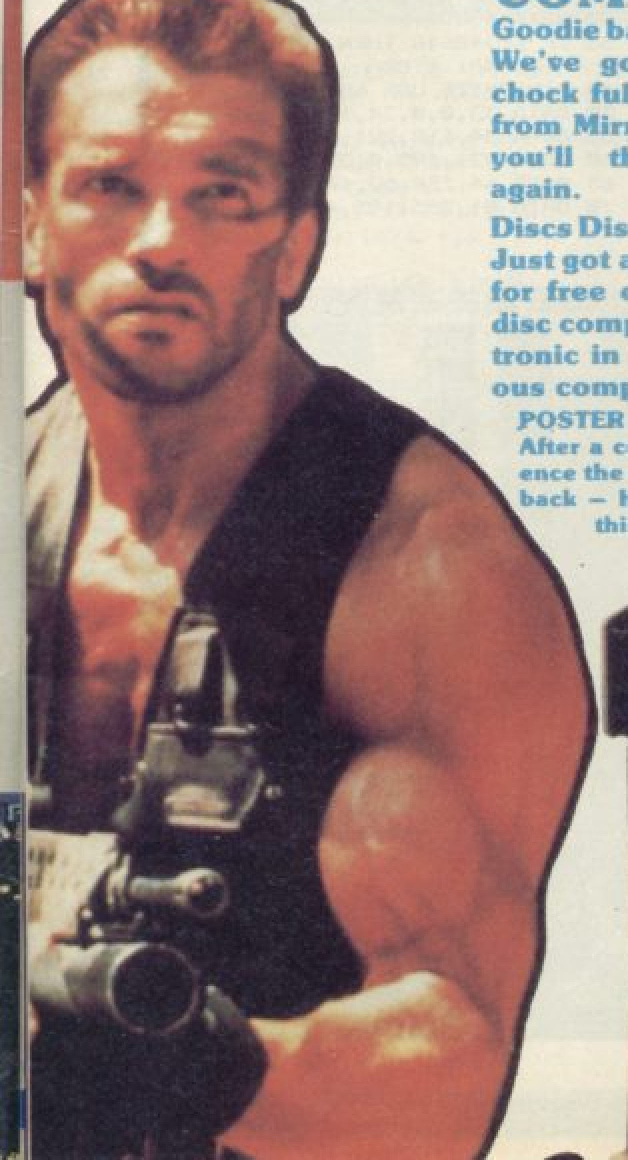


REGULARS

SU Front Covers.
We print every single front cover we've ever done again and tell you how fabulous we are!(*)
(*) Unfortunately we had to drop this feature due to terminal self indulgence and the fact that the Mad Celt would have become unbearably conceited.

COMPETITIONS







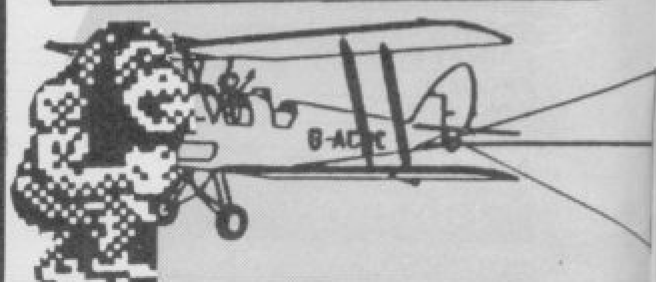
SU INVADES THE COIN-OPS 83

We got into the arcades and ask real people what they think of the latest and hottest machines. We print their pictures! Yeeeek!



POKE

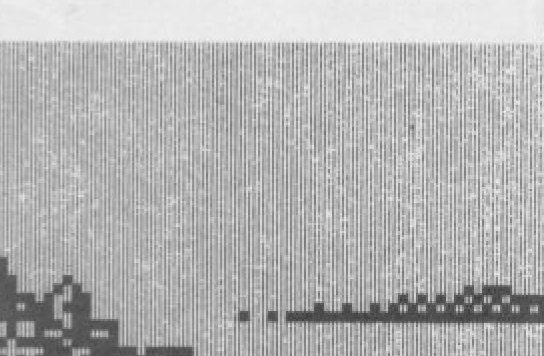
ALL POKES BY . . .



SUPER HANG ON Pt 1

Type in the listing, *Run* it and play the game tape if you're having trouble with Activision's 3D corker. You'll now have as long as you want to glide around the track, admiring the scenery.

```
   1 REM SUPER HANG-ON pt1 poke
   2 REM (c) A.SINGH '88
   3 REM
   5 CLEAR 45000
  10 LET t=0: LET w=1
  15 FOR f=32768 TO 32906
  20 READ a: POKE f,a
  25 LET t=t+w*a: LET w=w+1
  30 NEXT f
  40 IF t<>1226527 THEN  PRINT "
ERROR IN DATA": STOP
  50 PRINT AT 10,1;"START 'SUPER
 HANG-ON pt1' TAPE"
  60 LOAD ""CODE
  70 RANDOMIZE USR 32768
 100 DATA 221,33,121,128,217,6
 105 DATA 6,217,221,110,0,221
 110 DATA 102,1,221,78,2,6,0,17
 115 DATA 0,125,237,176,33,93
 120 DATA 128,1,7,0,237,176,30
 125 DATA 231,195,0,125,221,35
 130 DATA 221,35,221,35,217,16
 135 DATA 217,217,33,249,232,17
 140 DATA 167,251,1,30,3,237,176
 150 DATA 62,195,50,194,254,33
 155 DATA 72,128,34,195,254,195
 160 DATA 169,254,205,28,254,175
 170 DATA 50,64,255,33,99,128,17
 175 DATA 217,254,1,25,0,237,176
 180 DATA 195,197,254,49,177,175
 185 DATA 195,37,128,253,33,58
 190 DATA 92,237,86,33,88,39,217
 195 DATA 33,123,50,34,4,189,49
 200 DATA 167,97,195,0,91
 205 DATA 96,224,17,113,224,36
 210 DATA 194,224,12,206,224,14
 215 DATA 220,224,25,255,224,13
```





SUPER HANG ON Pt 2

Same routine and benefit as the other Poke, but this is for the last ten stages.

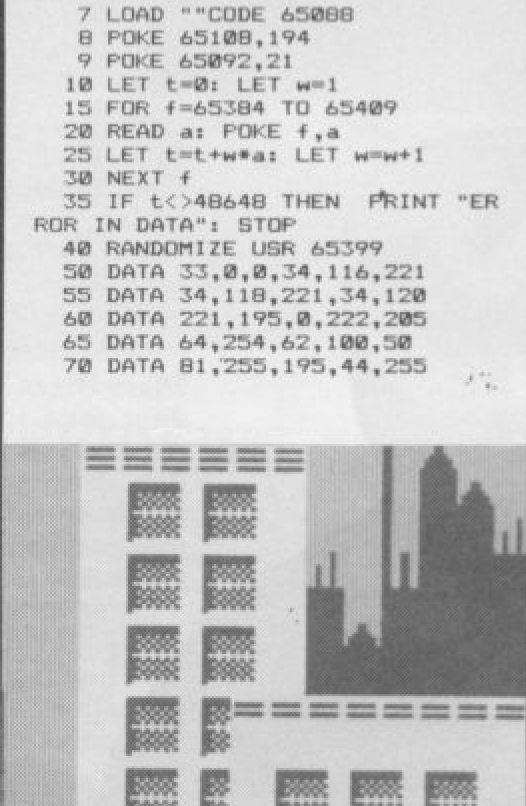


```
   1 REM SUPER HANG-ON pt2 poke
   2 REM (c) A.SINGH '88
   3 REM
   5 CLEAR 45000
  10 LET t=0: LET w=1
  15 FOR f=32768 TO 32906
  20 READ a: POKE f,a
  25 LET t=t+w*a: LET w=w+1
  30 NEXT f
  40 IF t<>1230696 THEN  PRINT "
ERROR IN DATA": STOP
  50 PRINT AT 10,1;"START 'SUPER
 HANG-ON pt2' TAPE"
  60 LOAD ""CODE
  70 RANDOMIZE USR 32768
 100 DATA 221,33,121,128,217,6
 105 DATA 6,217,221,110,0,221
 110 DATA 102,1,221,78,2,6,0,17
 115 DATA 0,125,237,176,33,93
 120 DATA 128,1,7,0,237,176,30
 125 DATA 231,195,0,125,221,35
 130 DATA 221,35,221,35,217,16
 135 DATA 217,217,33,249,232,17
 140 DATA 167,251,1,30,3,237,176
 150 DATA 62,195,50,194,254,33
 155 DATA 72,128,34,195,254,195
 160 DATA 169,254,205,28,254,175
 170 DATA 50,59,255,33,99,128,17
 175 DATA 217,254,1,25,0,237,176
 180 DATA 195,197,254,49,177,175
 185 DATA 195,37,128,253,33,58
 190 DATA 92,237,86,33,88,39,217
 195 DATA 33,123,50,34,45,188,49
 200 DATA 167,97,195,0,91
 205 DATA 96,224,17,113,224,36
 210 DATA 194,224,12,206,224,14
 215 DATA 220,224,25,255,224,13
```

RAMPAGE

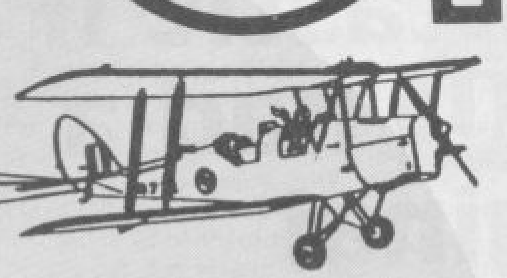
Total destruction can now be successfully achieved with this Poke. Every monster will be given an infinite energy supply.

```
   1 REM RAMPAGE poke
   2 REM (c) A.SINGH '88
   3 REM
   5 CLEAR 32767
   6 PRINT AT 10,6;"START 'RAMPA
GE' TAPE"
   7 LOAD ""CODE 65088
   8 POKE 65108,194
   9 POKE 65092,21
  10 LET t=0: LET w=1
  15 FOR f=65384 TO 65409
  20 READ a: POKE f,a
  25 LET t=t+w*a: LET w=w+1
  30 NEXT f
  35 IF t<>48648 THEN  PRINT "ER
ROR IN DATA": STOP
  40 RANDOMIZE USR 65399
  50 DATA 33,0,0,34,116,221
  55 DATA 34,118,221,34,120
  60 DATA 221,195,0,222,205
  65 DATA 64,254,62,100,50
  70 DATA 81,255,195,44,255
```





CITY

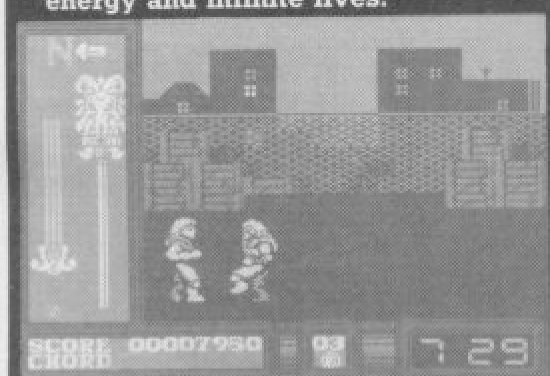


ADRIAN SINGH

● *A number of you have sent in requests for us to Poke particular games. We're only too happy to oblige, but since there are so many games we obviously can't Poke them all. So if you want us to Poke a particular game write in and we'll do so for the ones that get the most votes. Send your requests – together with your name and address – to Poke City, SU, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU*

MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

Type in the listing and *Run* it to endow yourself with both infinite energy and infinite lives!




```
   1 REM MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE
   2 REM poke (c) A.SINGH '88
   3 REM
  10 PRINT AT 10,0;"START 'MASTE
RS OF UNIVERSE' TAPE"
  20 LOAD ""CODE
  30 FOR f=61457 TO 61466
  40 READ a: POKE f,a
  50 NEXT f
  60 RANDOMIZE USR 61440
  70 DATA 175,50,189,164,50
  80 DATA 206,200,195,0,161
```



FRUIT MACHINE SIMULATOR

Fed up with running out of money, just as you were getting into the swing of the game? Type in this Poke, *Run* it, and play your game tape from the start, and you'll have unlimited cash to fritter.

```
   1 REM FRUIT MACHINE SIMULATOR
   2 REM poke (c) A.SINGH '88
   3 REM
   5 BORDER 1
  10 PRINT AT 10,1;"START 'FRUIT
MACHINE SIM' TAPE"
  20 LOAD ""SCREEN$
  30 FOR f=23296 TO 23315
  40 READ a: POKE f,a
  50 NEXT f
  60 RANDOMIZE USR 23296
  70 DATA 221,33,123,95,17
  80 DATA 130,158,62,155,55
  90 DATA 205,86,5,175,50
 100 DATA 234,192,205,27,207
```



JET BIKE SIMULATOR

Codemasters keep putting out their addictive sims that no-one can beat! Type in the Poke, *Run* it and follow the instructions on screen and you'll always qualify for the next course, no matter how dreadfully you ride.

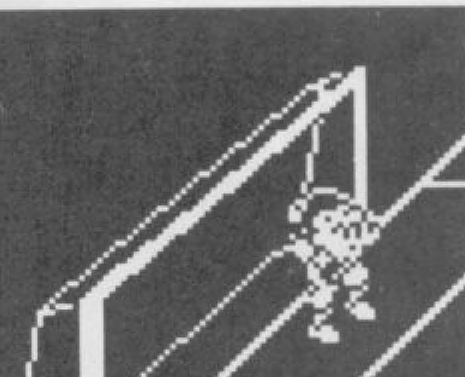
```
   1 REM JET-BIKE SIMULATOR poke
   2 REM (c) A.SINGH '88
   3 REM
  10 PRINT AT 10,0;"START 'JET-B
IKE SIMULATOR' TAPE"
  20 LOAD ""CODE 23296
  25 POKE 23372,104
  30 POKE 23373,91
  40 FOR f=23400 TO 23407
  45 READ a: POKE f,a
  50 NEXT f
  60 DATA 62,201,50,20,106
  70 DATA 195,198,92
 100 RANDOMIZE USR 23296
```



MATCH DAY II

A spooky little Poke if ever we saw one. Type it in and play the game for a while. You should notice some serious weirdness going on in 2 player mode. Useless, but highly amusing.

```
   1 REM MATCH DAY II poke
   2 REM (c) A.SINGH '88
   3 REM
   5 CLEAR 45000
  10 LET t=0: LET w=1
  15 FOR f=32768 TO 32906
  20 READ a: POKE f,a
  25 LET t=t+w*a: LET w=w+1
  30 NEXT f
  40 IF t<>1188622 THEN  PRINT "
ERROR IN DATA": STOP
  50 PRINT AT 10,3;"START 'MATCH
 DAY II' TAPE"
  60 LOAD ""CODE
  70 RANDOMIZE USR 32768
 100 DATA 221,33,121,128,217,6
 105 DATA 6,217,221,110,0,221
 110 DATA 102,1,221,78,2,6,0,17
 115 DATA 0,125,237,176,33,93
 120 DATA 128,1,7,0,237,176,30
 125 DATA 231,195,0,125,221,35
 130 DATA 221,35,221,35,217,16
 135 DATA 217,217,33,182,231,17
 140 DATA 167,251,1,30,3,237,176
 150 DATA 62,195,50,194,254,33
 155 DATA 72,128,34,195,254,195
 160 DATA 169,254,205,28,254,175
 170 DATA 50,64,255,33,99,128,17
 175 DATA 217,254,1,25,0,237,176
 180 DATA 195,197,254,49,177,175
 185 DATA 195,37,128,253,33,58
 190 DATA 92,237,86,33,88,39,217
 195 DATA 62,24,50,226,199,0,49
 200 DATA 250,120,195,0,91
 205 DATA 18,223,17,35,223,36
 210 DATA 116,223,12,128,223,14
 215 DATA 142,223,25,177,223,13
```



. . . and just in case that little lot isn't enough for you, take a look in Kamikaze Bear's Combat Guide stuck on the front of this issue. You might find a poke or two in there to take your fancy. *Knightmare, Thundercats (Version 2), Flying Shark* . . .

FREE GAME★FREE GAME★FREE GAME★

NEXT MONTH

Wouldn't it be fantastic if next month's SU had a completely original game, written by one of the country's most awesome programming teams, strapped to the front of the magazine? A game that made all those other tapes of 'playable demos' on other magazines look like junk. Supposing it wasn't just a game but a tape chock full of great things like a Kamikaze Bear Loading screen and . . . more . . . supposing this was not a joke . . .

SU The Awesome Edition
Out February 18th
(just you wait)

★FREE GAME★FREE GAME★FREE GAME

FREE GAME★FREE GAME★FREE GAME★FREE GAME★

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TETЯIS

ARCADE REVIEW

Tetяis is the sort of game to give you nightmares. It's the sort of game to provoke newspaper headlines like "My son's mind warped by geometric fiends!" In the mould of infuriating wonders like **Rubik's Cube** and **September** (shortly to appear from Activision). **Tetяis** is quite the most maddeningly addictive and original game I've seen, ooh, all month.

Its Russian origins (hence funny "R" in the title) are entirely irrelevant so I'm sorry I mentioned them really. (What *are* you talking about – Ed?) Apparently it was invented by a cosmonaut on his coffee break or something.

The aim of the game is very simple indeed. From the top of the screen fall assorted coloured blocks – straight lines, 90 degree corners, straights with corners etc. You have to rotate the pieces as they fall and move them horizontally so when they reach the bottom of the screen all the sides touch each other. Gradually the platform gets higher and higher until it reaches the top of the screen and . . . the game ends.

Hang on. I must have missed something here. Yes, OK, so all the pieces aren't exactly touching each other. Yeah, so there are a few gaps here and there. Oh, I see. If I make the bits fall so they form a line along the bottom of the screen unbroken by gaps, that line will disappear, my score will shoot up and all the other bits will fall down one level. Now I've got more room to make more lines before I get to the top of the screen. I see . . .

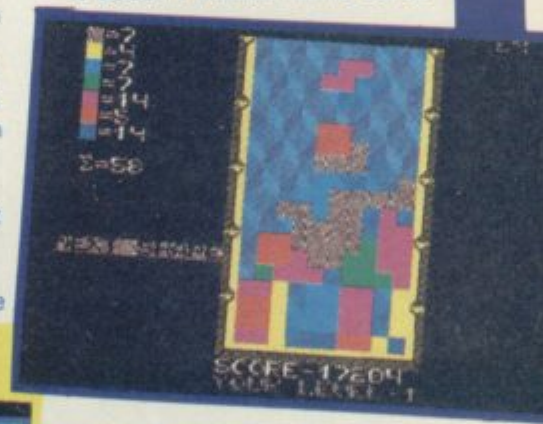
Obviously, you'd have to be some sort of genius to continually manage to make the bottom line fit just right; the bits just don't fall in a convenient order, and so the trick is to put each piece in a position where it will do most good to a number of lines at once. Sticking that "L" shape in the hole one way up may complete one line, but by rotating it through 90 degrees, you might be able to slide it in to bridge most of the gaps in three lines.

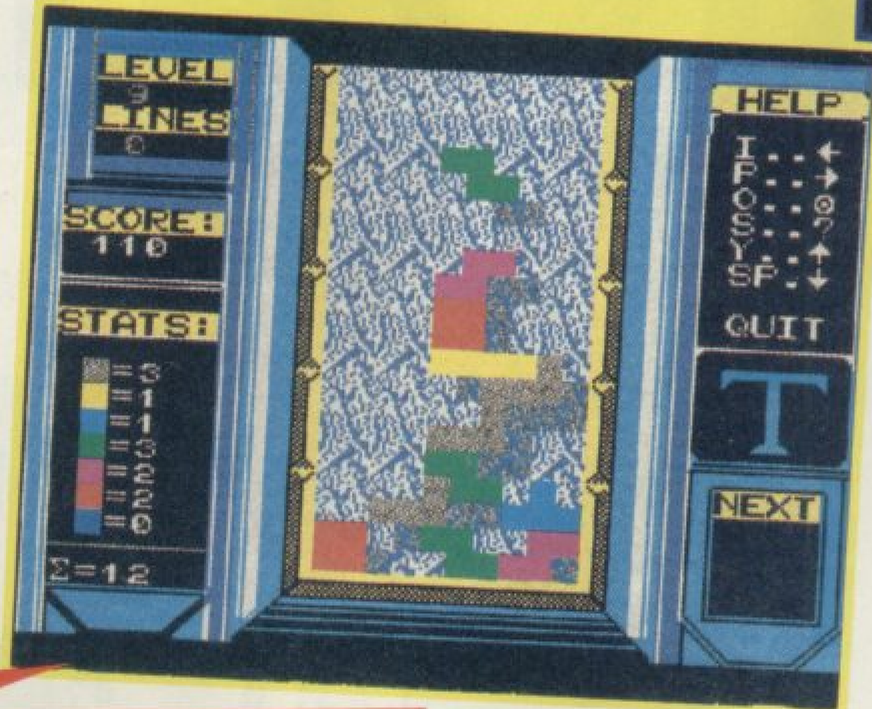
Depending on which level you are attempting (1-5 – chosen at the start of each game) the pieces will fall at an equivalent speed. I defy anyone to complete a line on Level 5 without cheating.

Extra points can be had by pulling the joystick down when you're happy with the piece's horizontal position and it's still a little way up the screen. This will cause the piece to fall down at a much faster – though uncontrolled rate. This is only recommended once you've got the hang of the game.

Tetяis may be absolutely brilliant to play, but, it has to be said, it's not the prettiest game around. The blocks are made entirely out of attribute squares, and with the colour on the TV turned down you find yourself – visually, at least – back in the days of the ZX81.

It doesn't matter. Who cares!





Apart from being highly original, **Tetяis** is very playable indeed. The random order of the pieces ensures that decisions must be made almost instantly, and the simplicity of the controls (left, right and rotate) make it easy to get started. There aren't the pages of rules and regulations found in most strategy games, and, although I never thought I'd say it, it does make a change from shooting things all day.

Instant impression: Dull, graphically retarded and intended for bored chess players.

Considered opinion: The most original and playable game in an age. A strategy game where reaction time and dexterity are crucial■

CLASSIC



PROGRAMMERS

Peter Jones has only just started programming for Mirrorsoft – **Tetяis** being his first game. Originally, the program was conceived and programmed on the PC by **Alexi Pasvitnov**, a researcher in the computer centre at the USSR Academy of Scientists

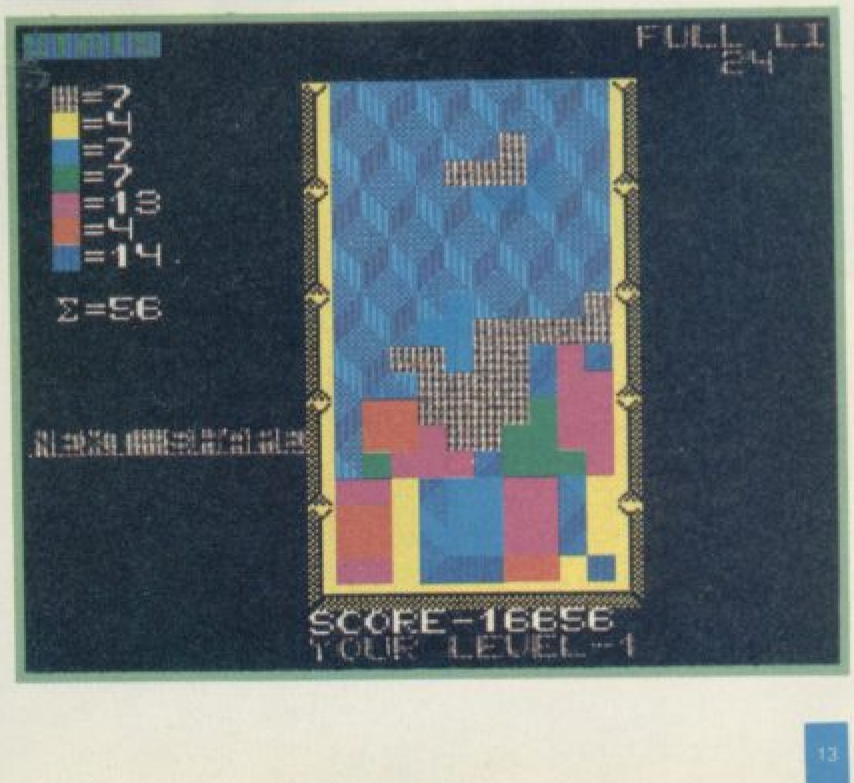
FACTS BOX

Simple to understand and nigh on impossible to beat. Lightning reaction game, very, very addictive. Superb

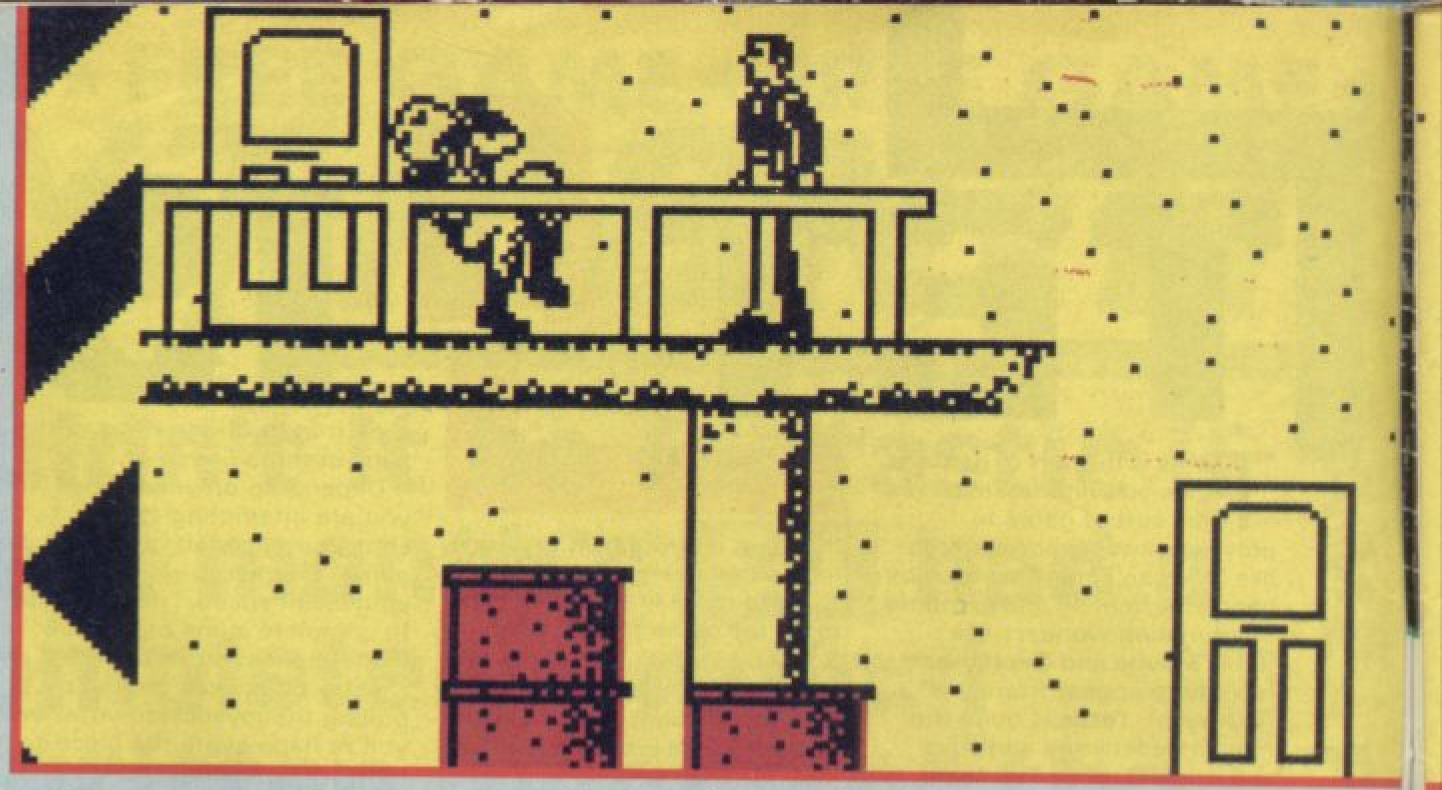
TETЯIS
Label: Mirrorsoft
Author: Peter Jones
Price: £7.99
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: [signature]

★★★★★ ★★★★★ 10







ROLLING

Rolling Thunder is an astonishingly faithful conversion of the Namco coin-op. It's a rollicking, shooty-shooty romp which brought the blood back to my cheeks and countless curses of frustration to my lips.

A horizontal scroller (and pleasingly smooth too), **Rolling Thunder** is a secret agent epic in which your task is to penetrate the headquarters of a sinister organisation dedicated to ...er, being nasty. In this case their nastiness takes the form of kidnapping some poutaceous beauty who lies bound and gagged at the end of the last level. Incentive enough to complete the game, you might think, and since its up to you to rescue her...

The hooded villains, who look like particularly nasty Klu Klux Klansmen, don't hesitate to **PUNCH**! you in the gob, **SHOOT**! you in cold blood, **BOMB**! you from the balconies or **DROWN**! you in the lakes (OK Jenks so you've been watching *Batman* on TVAM too), so you should have no compunction about gunning them down. All the animation is beautifully done, from the running figures, to the death-defying vaults over the handrails and onto the balconies, to the valiant leaps across (and into) piles of tyres, from which you have to peep out to shoot down cheeky chappies.

Mr Thunder ("but you can call me 'Rolling' ") has a limited supply of bullets. This can be replenished by standing in front of doors and pushing the joystick up to enter and search rooms. Some are empty, so they're only any good as temporary hiding places – but that's a bit wimpish. Some contain bullets, and others contain more powerful guns which shoot 'megabullets'. These can kill a hood with a single shot, and so are much prized. The baddies collapse gracefully in a heap, whereas if you are shot or punched to death, you clutch your throat, fall in a pile and expire unpleasantly. While the backgrounds of balconies, doorways and barrels are nicely detailed there are also areas which are just green lumps, the significance of which I can't explain.

While **Rolling Thunder** is very



PROGRAMMERS

TIERTEX may not be a name you've come across before, but a brief look at the Manchester firm's Softography will indicate its calibre. **John Prince** and **Duncan Campbell** make up the firm. John has a PhD in physics and is aged between 24 and 27 and Donald is 24 and has a masters degree in electronics.

SOFTOGRAPHY: **Ace of Aces** (*US Gold*, 1987), **10th Frame** (*US Gold*, 1987), **Goonies** (*US Gold*, 1987), **720°** (*US Gold*, 1987)





FACTS BOX

Great fun with this deceptively straightforward but stylishly programmed coin-op conversion

ROLLING THUNDER
Label: US Gold
Author: Tiertex
Price: £7.99
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

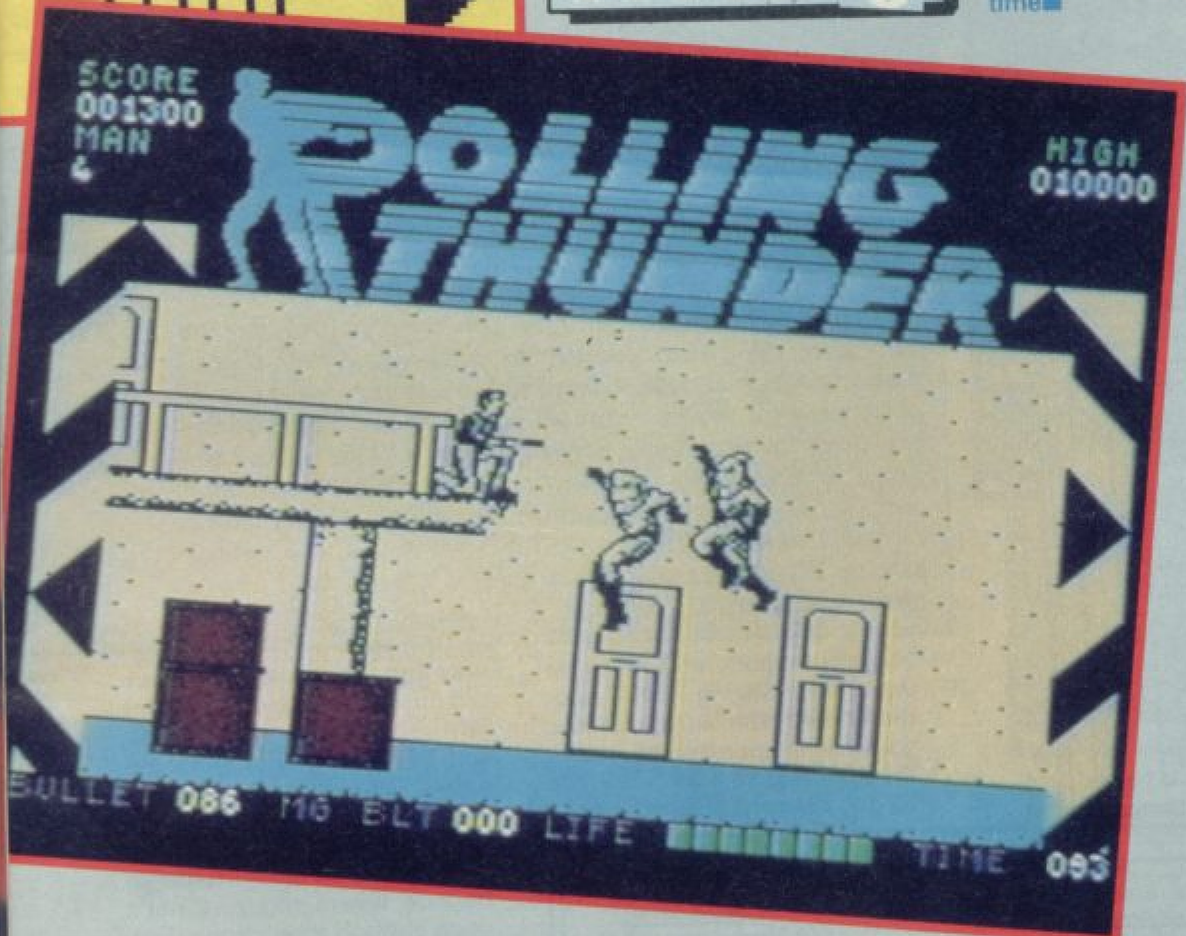
Reviewer Chris Jenkins

★★★★☆ ★★★★☆ 8

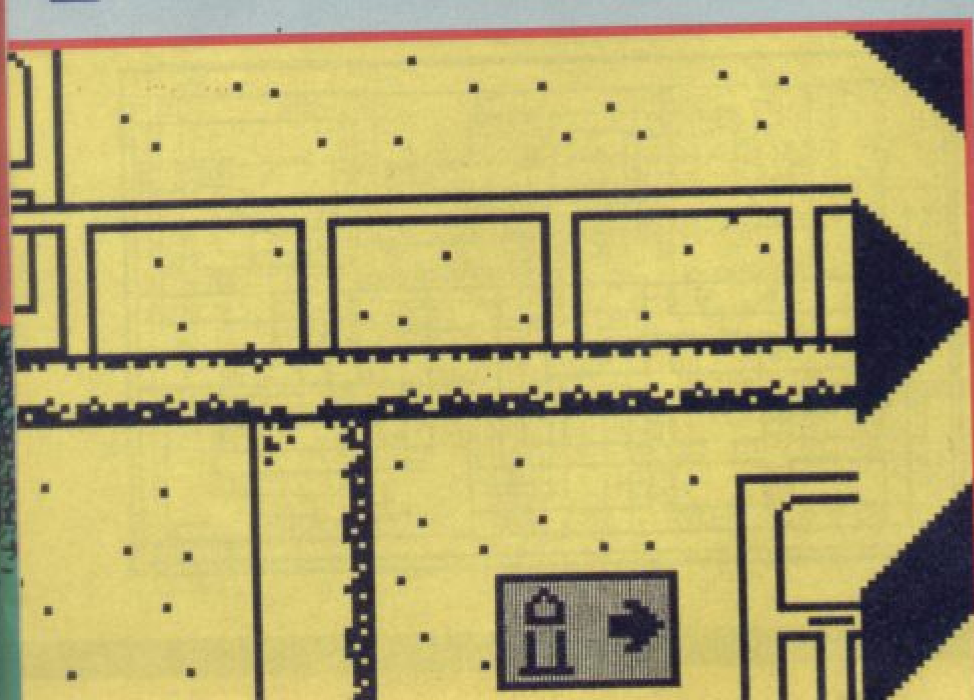
much a quick-reaction shoot-em-up, you really have to plan your advance if you are to have any hope of surviving; leap to and from the balconies, and avoid fighting as much as possible; save up your bullets, watch out for hoods emerging unexpectedly from doors, and you might have a chance.

Rolling Thunder is very much like an immensely superior **Kung-Fu Master**. The graphics and animation are great, and it looks like there's enough gameplay to keep you occupied for many long sessions. The most successful coin-op conversion I've seen for a long time■

ARCADE REVIEW



THUNDER

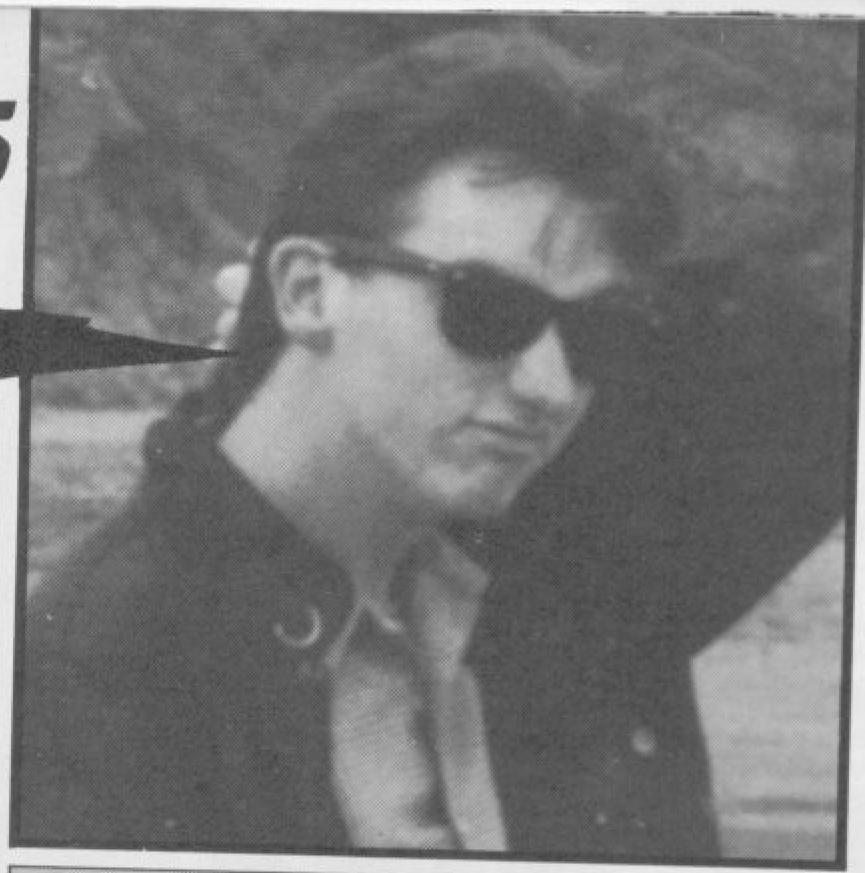




SOFTWARE STAR RATINGS

★	Avoid this game under all circumstances
★★	Poor and/or massively overpriced
★★★	Dull and uninteresting. If not actually awful
★★★★	Fairly average. Nothing to get excited about
★★★★★	OK but nothing special
★★★★★★	Not bad, some good points. See before you buy
★★★★★★★	Pretty good. We were quite impressed. Worth a look
★★★★★★★★	Good stuff. Well worth the money
★★★★★★★★★	Very good indeed. A must buy
★★★★★★★★★★	Brilliant. Must buy at all costs
Classic	The best program of its type we've seen to date

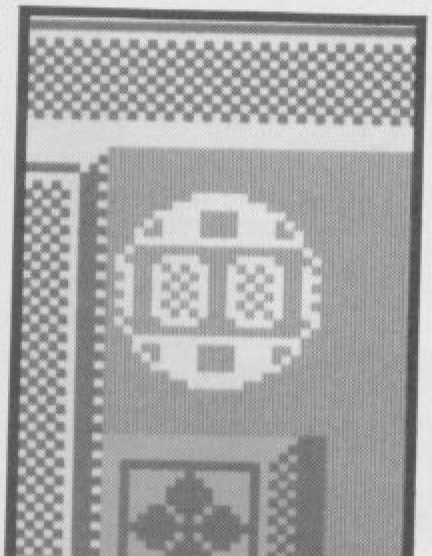
JON RIGLAR'S ZAP CHAT



Isn't it ultra-spooky how the word 'sheep' seems to pop up into your conversation every day? There you were, having a short back and sides with an odd dollop of grease on the top to make you look like Bruce Willis, when suddenly out of the blue the barber says 'sheep'.

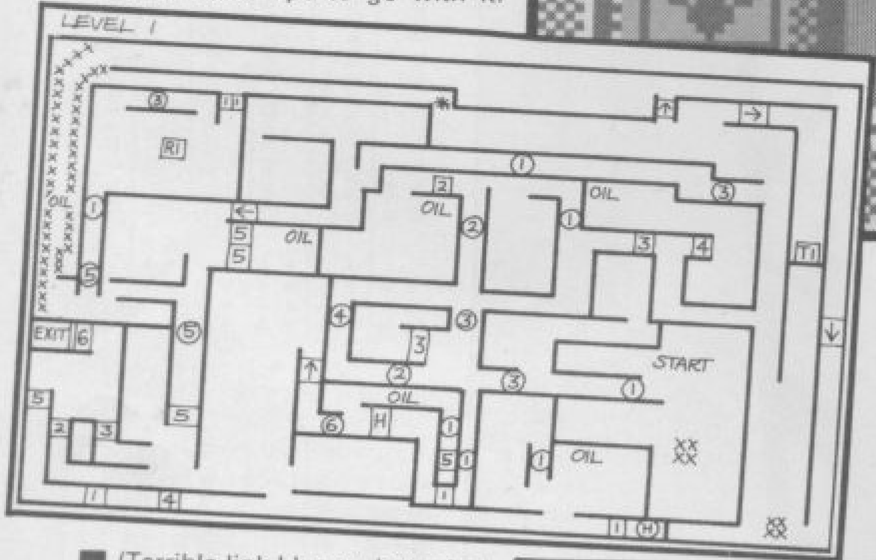
Stephen O'Neill from New 'Sheep' Zealand can't seem to rid himself of strangers banging on the front door and shouting 'Sheep!' So much so that he's investigated

Pulsator



▲ and some tips to go with it.

Well. Here we are again. After all that furore concerning the postal service (you know – when all the postmasters went a bit wibbly and tried to hold back any large brown parcels on the slim possibility that the contents may just be a pair of Armani boxer shorts, ahem) quite a few releases have gone a bit gooey and run off somewhere. However as the now famous SU saying goes – "We're not the party, the kids are the party – we're just the hosts" and, so without further ado, let's check out some swank tips on Pulsator, Combat School **and a trillion others. What else could you ever desire? (Yes I know, quite a lot actually, Jon.)**



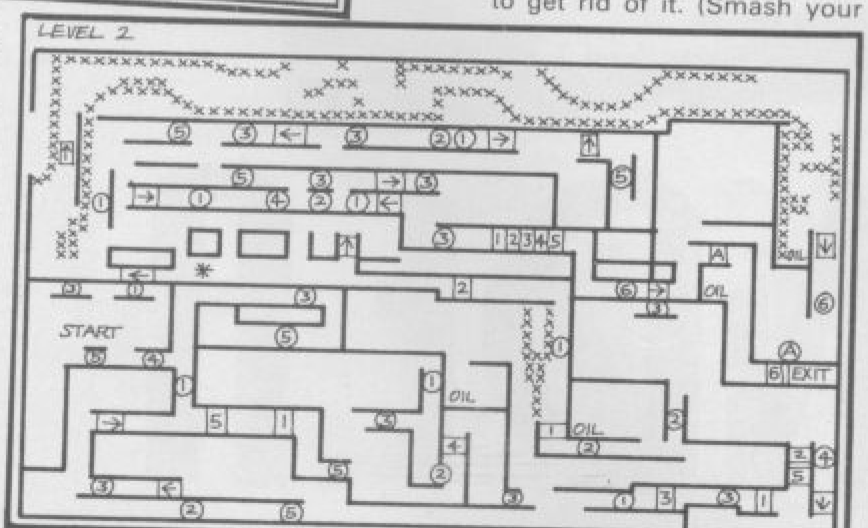
■ (Terrible link I know, but what do you expect so soon after Christmas?!)

■ **a)** Remember that you can't shoot while you are touching the wall – since walls are a good way to stop moving, this means that you have to shoot on the move.

■ **b)** Electric walls are pretty nasty – most of the time it is possible to avoid them completely by going a totally different way. It is a total waste of lives to go into the electrified section in Level 4. Especially when your controls are up the spout.

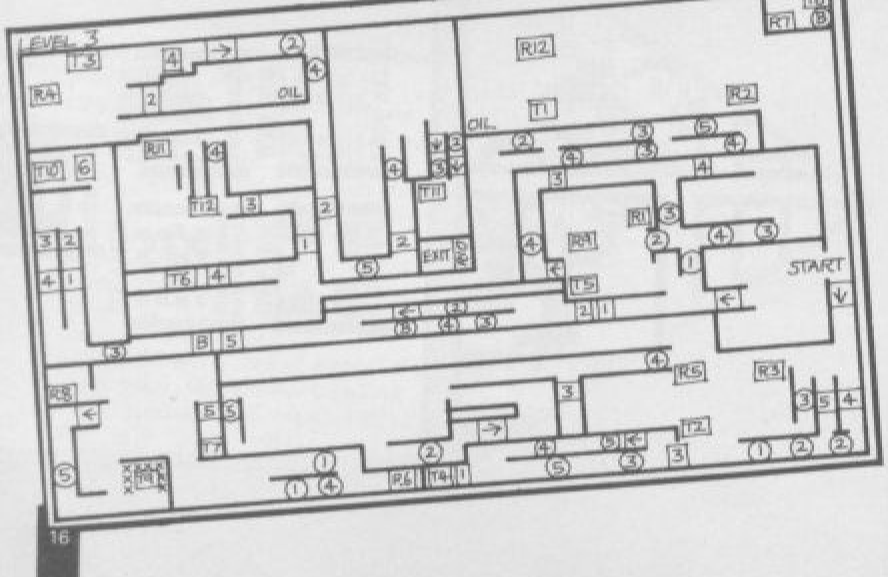
■ **c)** If you go into a screen with a baddie it is safest to shoot back out again and re-enter with guns blazing. If the baddie is invincible and it blocks your path to something vital it may be best to sacrifice a life to get rid of it. (Smash your way into the sucker!) Stephen did this and had plenty of lives left.

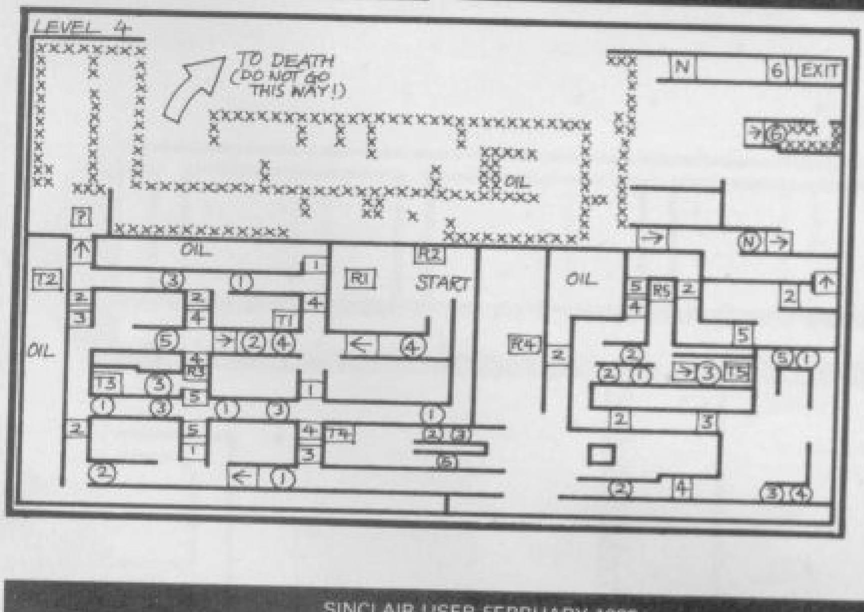
d) The map is vital. We decided against putting in routes, so you've to to work them out for yourself. Altogether now – it's a hard life, to be true lovers tog... (That's quite enough thank you – Ed). Before you attempt a level, plan your route on the map. Make sure you keep track of which toggles are on at each stage. I found it best to start at the end of a level and plan the way backwards.



PULSATOR MAP KEY

EXIT — ON TO NEXT LEVEL
⑥ NUMBERED TOGGLE
B LETTER GATE





Combat School

is a rather dashing new release from the people at Ocean. As we all know (or we should know if we've been reading the *Previews* etc) **Combat School** is a bit of a 1987 version of **Decathlon** and has at least forteeninemillionandapipsqueak different challenges including the dreaded 'bang the joystick left and right' event. So how do you play it successfully? Cast your peepers below for a pretty good guide, even if I say so myself.

ASSAULT COURSE

This really ridiculous – wheeze, hrumpgh, pant etc as you bash away at the left and right controls just to get then man to move a smidgen of a step. The main thing here is to time your 'assault' on the walls as precisely as possible to ensure that your speed doesn't suffer. The big 'uns need to be jumped at well in advance and make sure you keep banging the keys when hanging off the climbing frame. Piece of cake really.

A FIRING BIT

This has got to be a joke! All you need do is alter your sights so that they are at about the right height and then blast from side to side as the targets appear from the ground. You'll soon clock up the necessary doughnuts to go on to the next section. Hurrumph.

THE HARDISH BIT

The man of steel section is rather hard really due to the fact that as well as thumping the left and right keys simultaneously, you also get to move your man to the left and right and also to jump over things. The main things here to watch out for include the mines 'hidden' in the ground. I say 'hidden' because they are supposed to be, but you can easily see the marks in the ground. To avoid them, either leap over them or, if you have the time, avoid them by moving to the left or right. The other things that block your way are rocks and can be easily avoided. Then you should arrive at the river where you will be attacked by logs. Hmm. Sounds fun doesn't it?

TANKS

That's OK, anytime. (No more tank jokes, I promise.) This section can be a bit nasty because rather a lot of tanks come at rather high speed. And you should be aiming to achieve at least 95 direct hits to succeed and move on the following section. Needless to say, I stood absolutely no chance of doing that.

ARM WRESTLING

Yes there is.

A BIT MORE SHOOTING

This is the one. It's really hard. The important thing is to remember what target you are supposed to be aiming at – if you miss *Fire* and hit the wrong one, then it's a quick trip to springslingronggotland for you matey! Actually you are forced to wait until the targets are replaced before you can regain the control and continue – this wastes precious time and you have to amount rather a large number of hits before progressing.

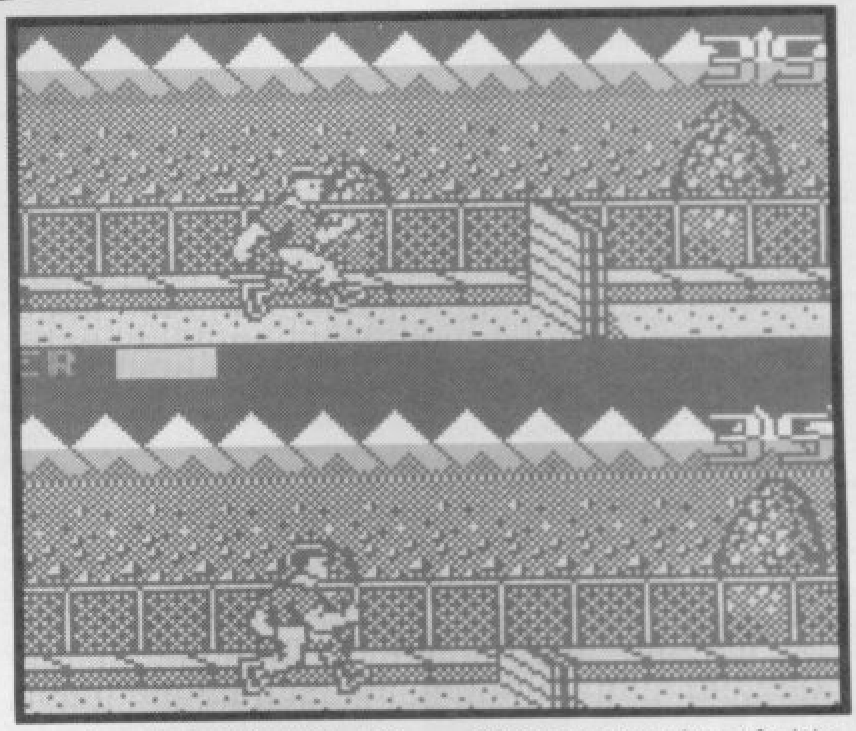
And here's a little missive to tickle your cockles. At this very moment Riglar Emporium of Pretty Damn Swank and Clever Circuits Ltd, it designing a snazzy box of tricks that automatically bangs the keys for you. All you need is a battery and a couple of components (ie a few transistors, resistors and the odd capacitor here and there) and a piece of veroboard. I'll say no more but the circuit is designed to send signals into your joystick port and you can adjust the speed of operation of the left and right up to a maximum of 15 times a second – which

'LET'S HAVE SOME HIGH SCORES' SCORES

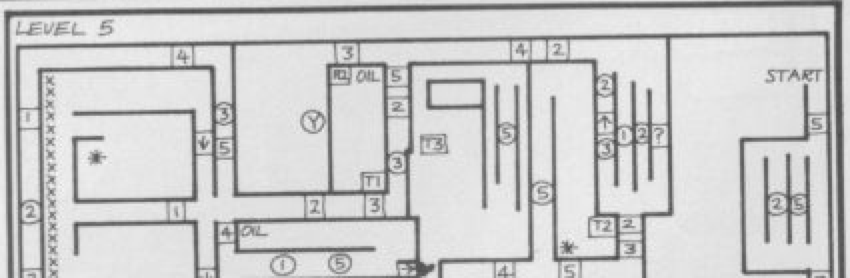
Combat School	45900	Michael Revell
Super Sprint	23800	Michael Revell
Deathwish Twee	187270	Tommy Green
ATV Simulator	39230	Chris Reeves
Super Sprint	9530	Chris Reeves
Deathwish Twee	475381	Chris Reeves
Space Harrier	6423628!	James West
Renegade	128000	Hemal Radia
Athena	60670	Silver mini metro
Mikie	143570	Richard Hall

If you want to send in your high score and have it appear in a slightly left slanted box with your name on a back background then send all offerings on a ten pound note to the usual address.





Ⓑ KEY
XXX ELECTRIFIED WALL
[→] ONE WAY GATE IN DIRECTION OF ARROW
OIL – ENERGY
✱ – BONUS
[T1] TRANSPORTER (NO.1)
[R1] RECEIVER (OF TRANSPORTER NO.1)
START – STARTING POSITION ON LEVEL
[?] ANNOYING THING THAT REVERSES UP AND DOWN KEYS



THE WELL 'ARD TOP TEN (FIVE ACTUALLY)

It's a mad rush these days. Thousands of people are trying desperately to get their name in print by sending their all-time top five games in. It could be you! It could be the milkman! It could be little Terry down the road with the large catapult! But it's Peter Hancock from Launceston, actually

1 Combat School	Ocean
2 Boulder Dash	Somebody else
3 Starquake	Bubble Bus
4 Elite	Firebird
5 Trantor	Go!

Peter lists **Rockman** as the worst game to be released and is at pains to point out that his favourite meal is ratatouille with sausage, chips and beans covered with vindaloo and banana flavoured curry with a sprinkling of herbs and spices. As afters, he would murder for a pint of lager with meat balls (covered in milk and pepper of course) floating gently on the top. Really? Fine

means that you can wash your trousers while the machine completes all the **Decathlon** clones for you. Hmm.

Do you remember **Movie**? It was pretty good and

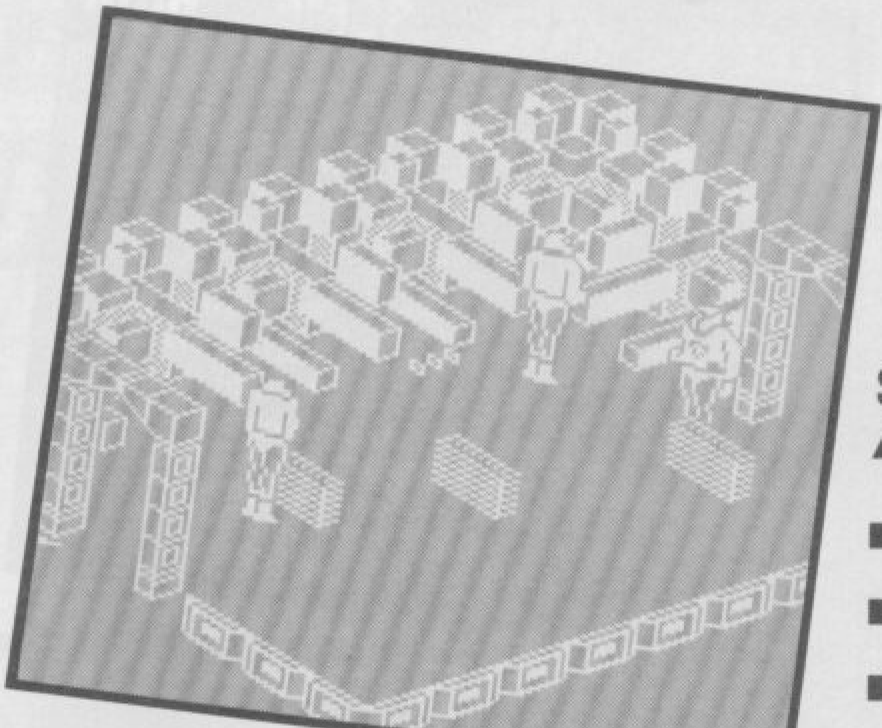
Phantom Club

is the latest game from the same author and has over 500 rooms! 500! I ask you! What's the point?

In **Phantom Club** it is up to you to climb up the ladder of superheroes to become the new almightly powerful bod and clean up the world. Part of the problem in doing that, is that you have to complete around eight missions. Part of the problem in doing *that* is the fact that to find out what your mission is, you have to locate a cinema screen. And part of the problem is doing *that* is locating the damn things. And that's why I've spent the last few hours, mapping a few trillion of the rooms for you.

Some problem areas:

● Throughout the game, you'll encounter enemy superheroes. These all have different characteristics but, needless to say, all of them are likely to attack you if you run in front of them. Some will be stationary when you enter the screen and if you look around carefully (without moving anywhere) you may just spot a sneeky way around



them all. It is possible to avoid virtually all of the nasties encountered in the game and certainly you can save on energy by simply avoiding them instead of attacking the things. If you wish to fight off one of them, then it's pretty simple. Get in close and make sure you run in front of it once. This will activate the man and he will chase after you. Then run to the end of the room and turn around. The enemy will then be daft enough to line himself up and *Fire* at you. At this point you let rip and blast him to smithereens and duck out of the way when his bullet approaches.

● Spiders are nasty. Whether they have been created out of an enemy or were simply in the room when you first entered, they'll run all over the place and a lot of the time into your man. Your best defence here is a jump. But watch out. You may end up landing on the creatures and as well as losing a lot of energy, you'll be bounced back off.

● Walls are used quite frequently in the game to block exits etc. These are pretty simple to jump over if you're lined up correctly. You shouldn't find any real difficulty there unless you try to enter a room that has been blocked.

● Man-eating plants from Borneo can be evil little you-know-whats. One minute they look like an innocent little plant and then as soon as your man get near enough, they turn around and take a bite out of him. But there should be no real problem – when you enter a room look around and immediately check to see if there are any plants and then plan a route around them. A bit of common really.

● Finally, there are the nasty modes written in by the programmere when he prevents your man from leaving the room etc. Depending on which sign appears in the top left-hand corner, you may have to hold out in a room until a beeping noise stops, or you may have to kill something in the room to reveal an exit. The most common of these is the 'hold-out' variety. The symbol will appear and the beeping will start. Usually you are positioned in a room with a rather nasty alien type thingy and you will have to run aorund and around until either you manage to destroy it or until the beeping stops.

● The second variety of trap is the hidden passage type. The symbol will once again appear and no matter how hard you try, you'll not be able to leave. The trick here is to first attack and destroy the alien in the room with you. This may or may not be difficult. ('Trust me, I know what I'm doing.' *Sledgehammer* joke there folks.) If nowt all happens once the alien has copped it, then you'll need to look for something else to shoot. Perhaps a wall panel?

Super Hang On

here's the track layouts for the first couple of tracks. I know, I know – you're all going to say, 'Wot's the point of having layouts for a game like this?' Well, believe me, there are several tricks of the trade designed to improve your performance. Here they are:

● Firstly, most peole realise that when you approach a corner on a bike the best thing to do is get as close to the inside edge and hang on for grim death, or at least until the corner runs out – but in **Hang On**, it is best to approach a corner right on the outside edge and then bounce around the corner at full speed. After a couple of attempts, you should find yourself hitting the edge of the road and then being bounced back into the road. It works all the time and as long as you approach the corner OK, you should miss any road-side obstacles (like trees, signs and the odd banana).

● If, at any time, you head into a corner too fast and pile on

FANZINE FILE

● Quite a spook spodlet full of funzines arrived this month and so a few have been consigned to the round filing cabinet until next month. One of the more regular attempts at stardom comes from **Specscene** which is produced by a rather odd looking chap who calls himself 'Saf'. Very strange indeed. However, not put off in any way, I had a quick glimpse through the pages and thought 'Hmm'. If for some obscure reason you wish to think 'Hmm' as well, then send whatever money you can find in your pockets to Andrew Steel, 85 Kipling Way, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 1TS. Hmm.

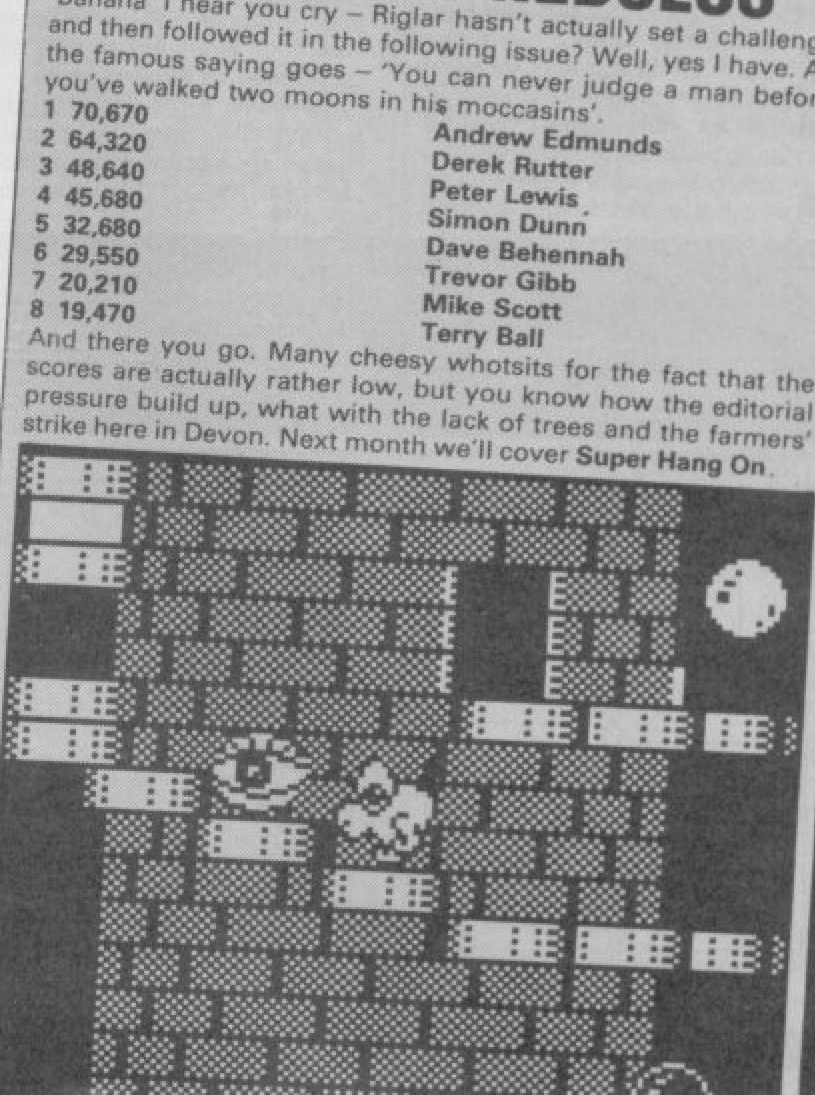
● One really good fanzine which is actually printed (Printed! I ask you, wot's 'ee trying to do?) is **EPROM** which is edited by Tony 'I've recently got married actually' Worrall. **EPROM** is one of those fanzines that are produced every six months or so (I wish I didn't phrase that sentence like that now). And it's actually rather good Melvin. In **EPROM 4,** which may be materialising sometime around now, Tony is promising a splediferous interview with Andrew Hewson which just goes to show why the price of onions has gone up recently??

ZAPCHAT JOLLY BIG EIGHT: NEBULUS

'Banana' I hear you cry – Riglar hasn't actually set a challenge and then followed it in the following issue? Well, yes I have. As the famous saying goes – 'You can never judge a man before you've walked two moons in his moccasins'.

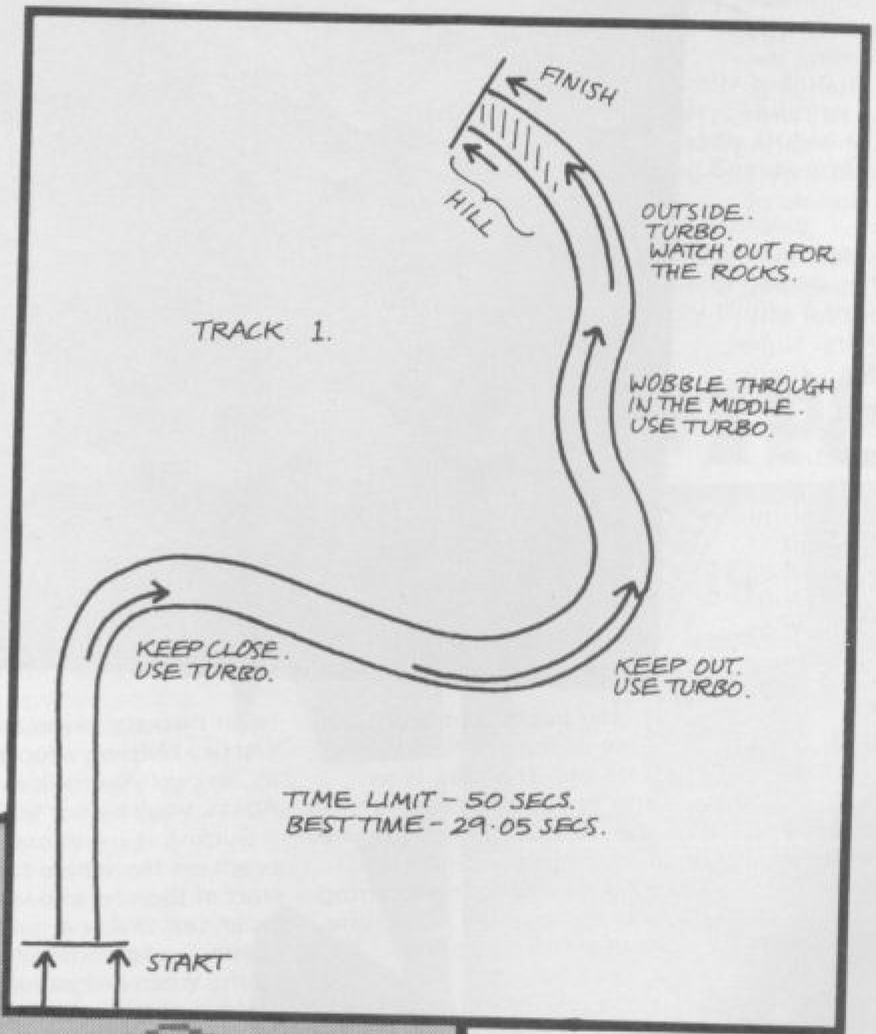
1	70,670	Andrew Edmunds
2	64,320	Derek Rutter
3	48,640	Peter Lewis
4	45,680	Simon Dunn
5	32,680	Dave Behennah
6	29,550	Trevor Gibb
7	20,210	Mike Scott
8	19,470	Terry Ball

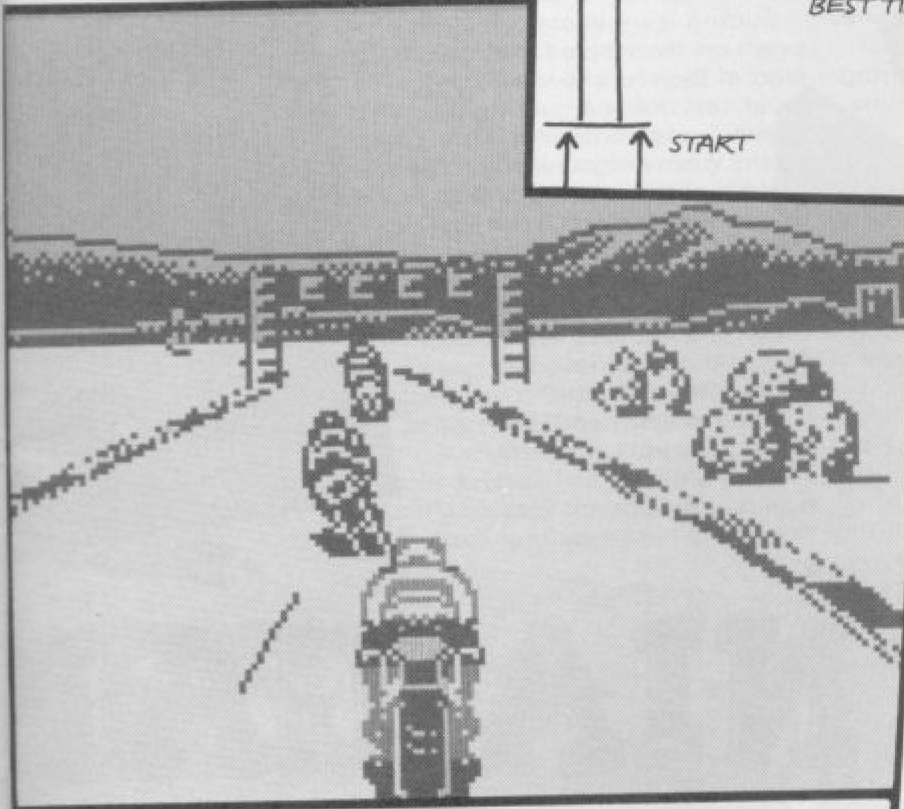
And there you go. Many cheesy whotsits for the fact that the scores are actually rather low, but you know how the editorial pressure build up, what with the lack of trees and the farmers' strike here in Devon. Next month we'll cover **Super Hang On**.



the brakes, make sure that you make your way to the inside of the road otherwise the bikes behind will pile up on you and thus your speed will go right down and the bike is likely to get bounced all over the shop. Moving immediately to the inside will allow you to ride out the corner and then gradually spped (or even speed matey!) up once again.

● Hills. In some of the levels, you find yourself climbing whopping great hills. These are fine, but you could find yourself bombing it up one with the turbo on full pelt and then suddenly it disappears and you're confronted with a sharp corner. So watch out – don't attempt to turn the cassette over when you think that you're on a nice long staight. The other type of hill leads downwards and usually turns a corner at the same time. These are pretty difficult, and you'll need to brake hard as you approach it and then bang the throttle back on to pull out of it.

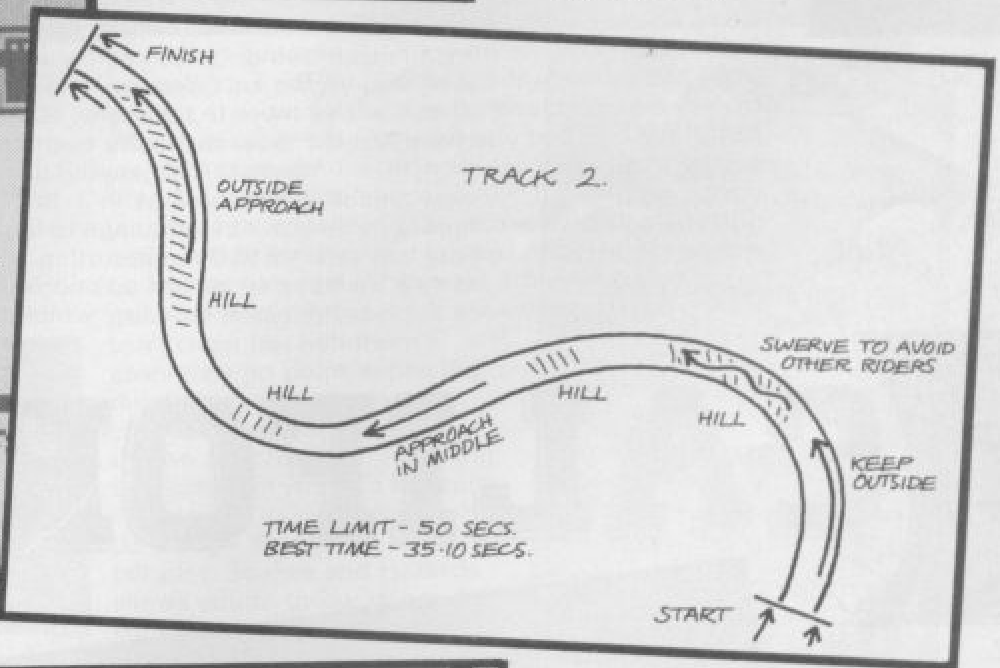


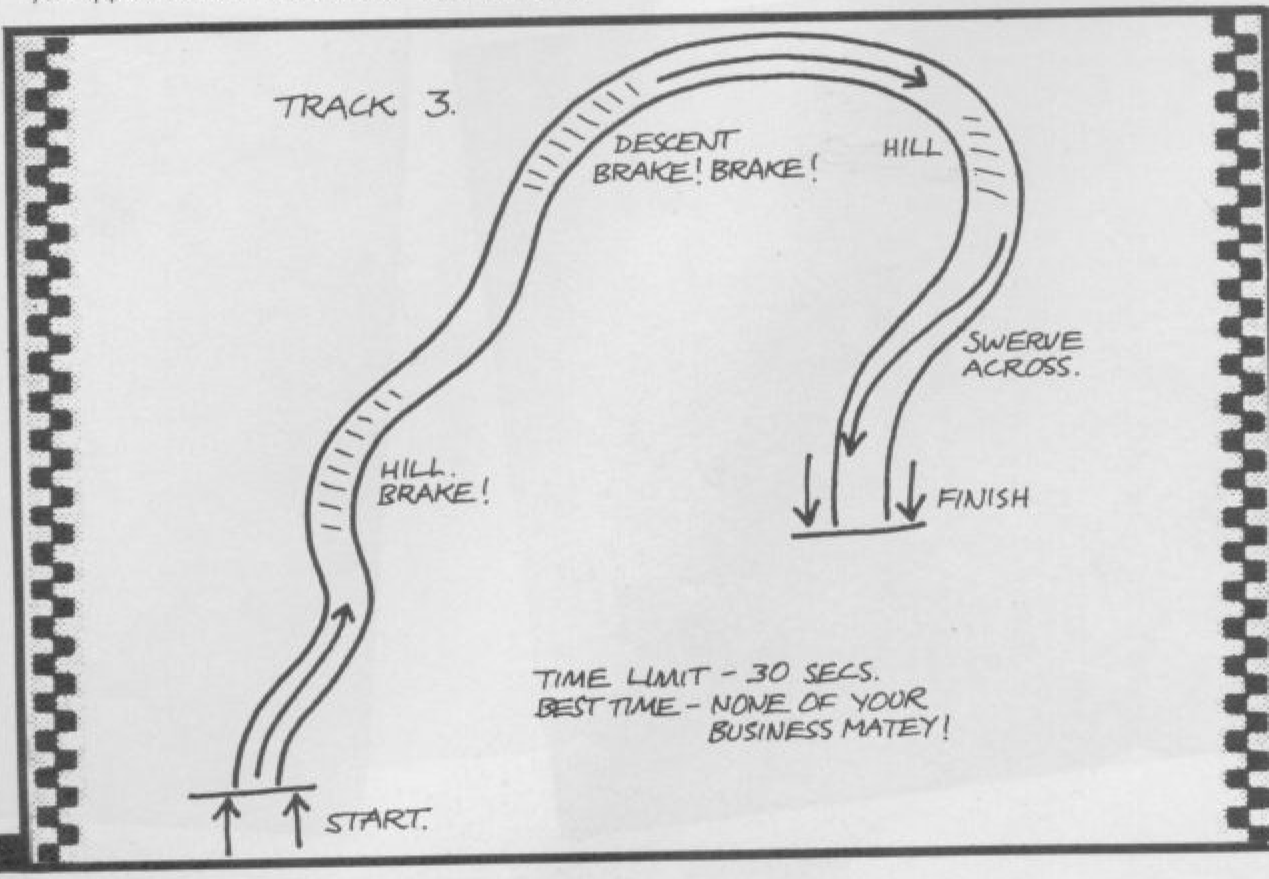


JON RIGLAR'S ZAP CHAT

● The rest is common sense really. If you are at all interested, my personal best on the first two tracks are 36.01 and 29.05 seconds – respectively – and I defy anybody to send in a better time! On the couple of track layouts that have been printed, I've indicated the best approach to the more tricky corners and where to expect hills.

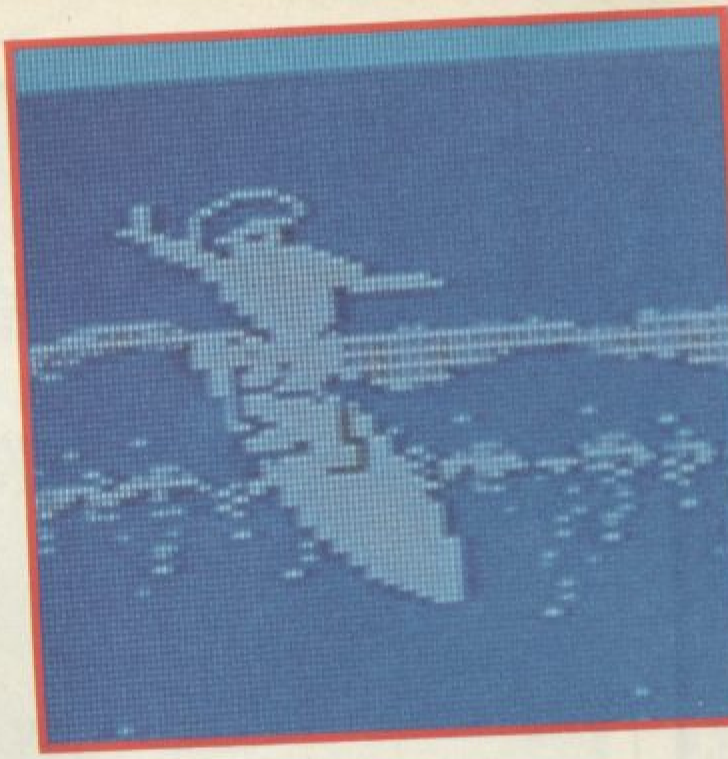
You can wake up now, I've finished. Next month we'll tell you exactly where to expect problems in US Gold's **Outrun** and there definitely *will not* any tips for Mirrorsoft's **Andy Crapp.** (I mean, **Andy Capp.**) Also I'm hoping to print a whopping great spandonly of a Poke Corner due to the large amount of requests ■





Oh for heaven's sake! Don't these Californians ever do any work? They seem to spend all flaming day down on the beach, 'hanging out' or whatever it is you are supposed to do whilst wearing a pair of shorts so loud they could jam the radio signals of nearby aircraft.

Take **California Games,** for example. No sign of checking out the old newsagent for any part-time vacancies here. Nope. Just lazing around in a variety of leisurewear, being moderately sporty and topping up their tans. And I must say, it's really rather good fun.







There are six pseudo-sporty events on the tape, most of which you won't have seen anywhere else, owing to their exclusively Californian bent (ooer) They are – in horrific multi-load one-event-at-a-time order – Half Pipe Skateboarding, Foot Bag, Surfing, Roller Skating, BMX Racing and Flying Disc.

On loading, a menu will ask you to plod through a fairly lengthy set of procedures where you can name each player (up to eight) and decide who is to sponsor each one. (Quite how this affects the game is beyond me, but I guess it's nice to know you have a meaty conglomerate on your side.) Then there's the joystick/keyboard options and other fiddly little bits that you have to endure in order to get on with the games.

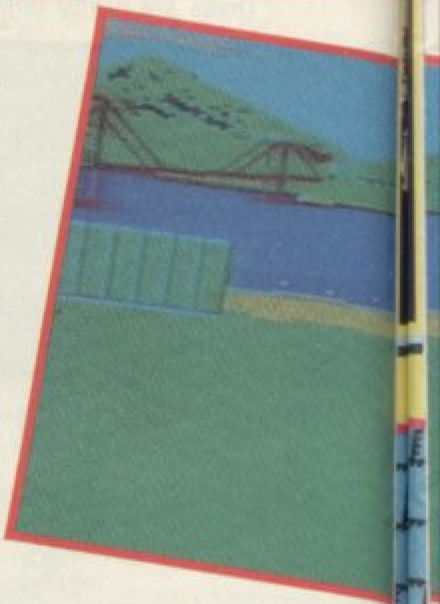
First off, skateboarding is wonderful. You can pick up speed by pushing the joystick up and down, so you are eventually nearly running off the edge of the enormous concrete arc. The idea is to perform as many stunts as possible, in the 75 second time limit. There are around six stunts in all, and trying to string them together in the most time-effective manner is quite exciting.

The graphics throughout the games are more workmanlike than 'pretty', but they're very effective and incredibly smooth

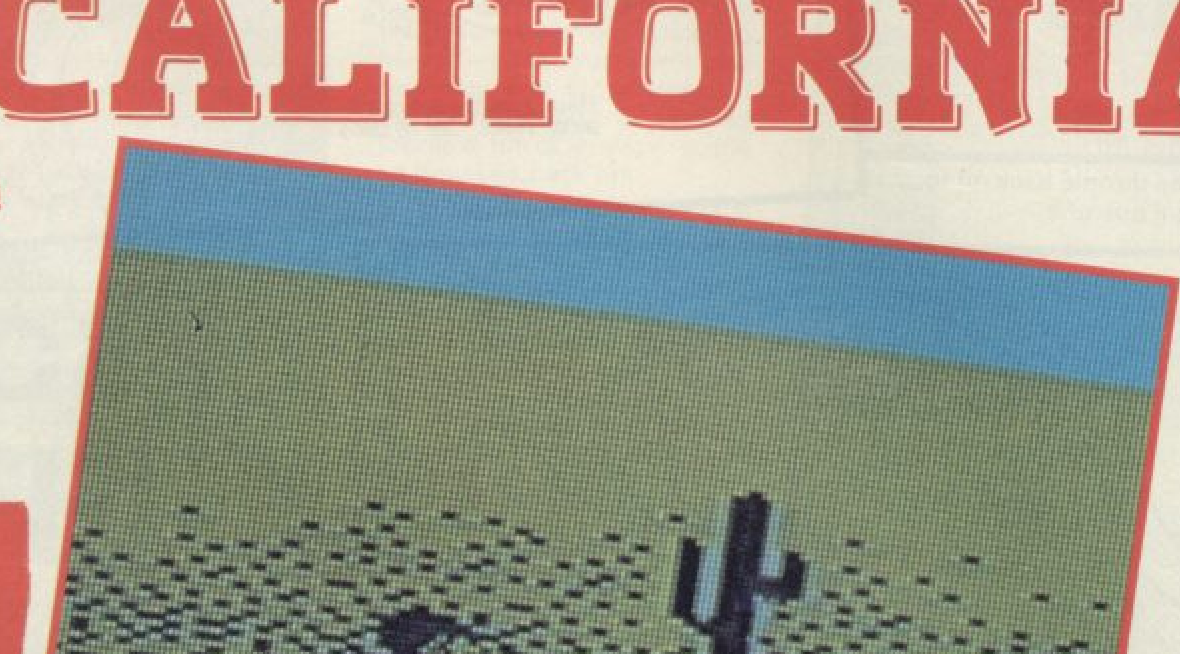
The Foot Bag, or Hacky Sack for those in the know, is easily the most laughable event. Not because there's anything actually wrong with it, but because you manage to look so utterly stupid, contorting your legs into absurd positions in order to keep a tiny white dot (your hacky sack) in the air. It's just like keeping a football in the air, except you look more silly. Again, you're on a time limit.

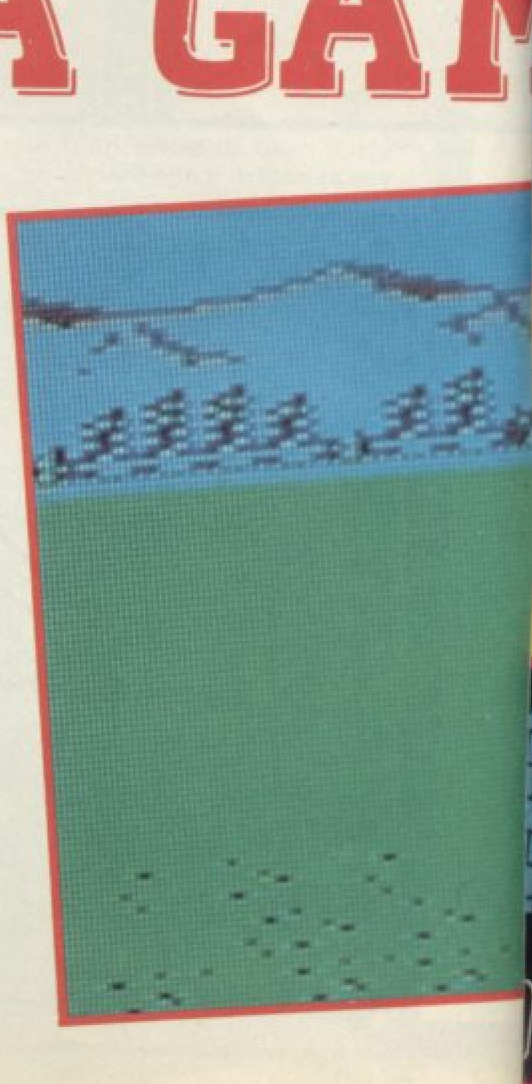
Surfing is the most enjoyable event on the whole tape. You start at the top of a wave, and must surf down it, picking up speed, and then turn and glide up the wave before reaching the bottom of the screen. Just as you're about to reach the top, hit the fire button, jerk the stick right, and you'll take off. Completing perfect dives is tricky, though very rewarding. This is the most relaxing event and totally enjoyable.

Roller skating and BMX Racing are both a bit iffy. They're side-on, and involve picking up as much speed as possible whilst avoiding



CALIFORNIA GAM











obstacles in the road. While roller skating, you appear to suddenly turn into a girl (just as well I'm confident about my sexual orientation, eh)? These sections really aren't very good. You can't really get up enough speed to make them exciting, and the limited acrobatics possible make both events a trifle dull.

The Flying Disc is actually the Frisbee. Epyx have managed to get a very good feel for the event, although visually it's not very exciting. You've got to set both the strength and the angle of your throw. This is done by trying to stop a wavering line on the correct position on a bar. It's actually quite tricky, as the wavering line shoots along, and you have to be very accurate in your timing as to wher you're going to stop the thing if you're going to achieve anything other than a totally pathetic throw.

Once launched, you can follow the progress of the disc on a monitor at the top of the screen. The next stage is to catch the frisbee. You move another character left and right, and by judging when the frisbee is going to be at hand height, you should be able to intercept it. If you misjudge by a long way, it's hopeless. Only a short way out, and you can make a sprawling dive which may or may not be successful.

California Games is great value for money. Admittedly graphically speaking I've seen much better, and the multi-load aspect is a definite pain, but there's enough variety and it's programmed well enough to redeem much of this.

MES

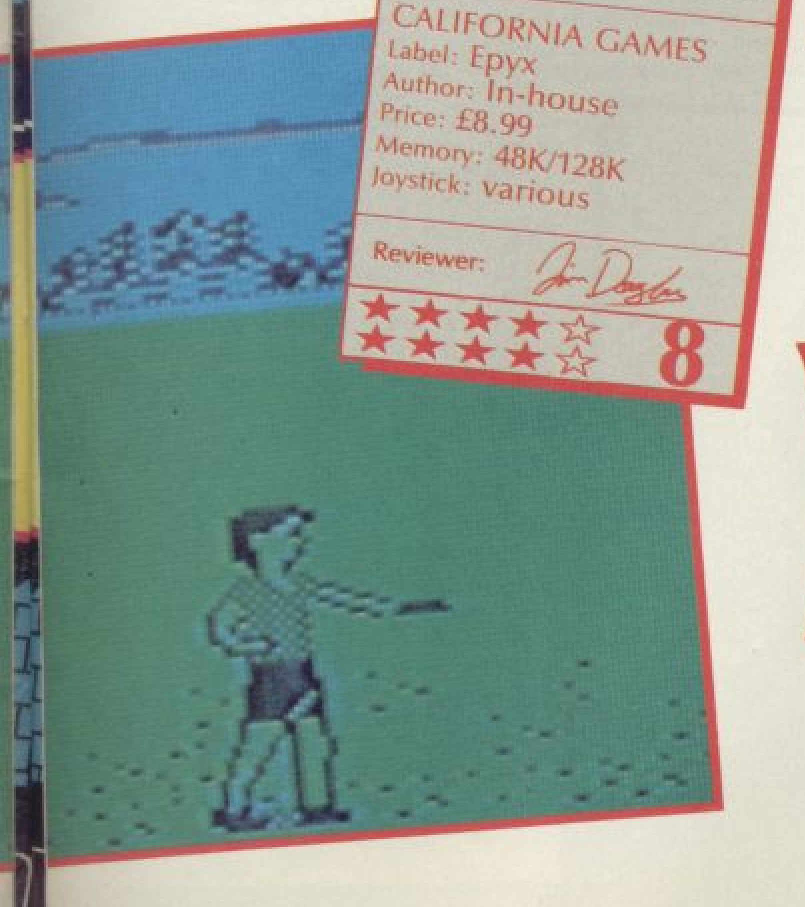
FACTS BOX

One of the best sports-sims around. 4 great events and 2 iffy ones. Definitely worthwhile.

CALIFORNIA GAMES
Label: Epyx
Author: In-house
Price: £8.99
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Jim Douglas

★★★★☆
★★★★☆ **8**



ARCADE REVIEW

COMPENDIUM

In a fit of generosity, Gremlin has provided **Compendium,** four games for the price of one.

Join the Wink family in four bouts of jolly jappery, and play Shove a Sledge, Tiddly Drinks, Christmas Ludo and Snakes and Hazards.

Compendium is, you may have guessed, slightly way out versions of traditional games. For instance, Tiddly Drinks has



you catching not plastic counters, but empty pint glasses, thrown by the Father Wink. Snakes and Hazards gives you real snakes!

To be perfectly honest with you, I'm not a fan. I've always thought that the only real fun to be had as far as board games go is the cheating aspect. If you can't cheat like hell there's absolutely no point in playing them. And as the computer chooses how many you've thrown (no chance of nobbling the dice here) you're a bit stuck. There are certain things you can do though, that aren't entirely fair play. Snakes and Hazards allows you to throw things in your opponent's way. Present Victoria with a telephone, Ralph with a computer, Tiny Tim with a teddy, Sniffer the dog with a lampost, and they'll stay on that particular square until the next go, so some tactical cheating is almost called for.

But it's not the same is it, as setting fire to the dice? There's not an awful lot of cheating to be had in Ludo either. It's a question of playing the usual game, but avoiding Mum and Dad, this being Christmas Eve.

Shove a Sledge, I presume is a variation on Shove Ha'penny, but I'm not really old enough to remember that sort of thing. The game involves pushing Tiny Tim in his sledge, trying to stop the sledge in one of ten marked out squares. First player to land their sledge in all of the marked squares wins. I had twenty-seven goes at this game, and only landed the sledge in one box once.

Finally there's Tiddly Drinks, Father Wink will drink anything from 1-6 pints (there's nothing like moderation) and will then chuck the empty glasses for one member of his horrendous family to catch. Keep going till closing time and then the person who caught the most glasses is the winner.

I can't help feeling that all these games are much better left in their original forms. They don't gain anything from being on computer, apart from the obvious benefit of being able to play Ludo all by yourself if you're the sort of person without any friends.

Sadly there's not a lot that you can do to kiddies board games that will turn them into something special■

FACTS BOX

Rather bland collection of four well-known games. Computerising them seems to have added nothing to their already limited attraction

COMPENDIUM
Label: Gremlin
Author: Steve Marsden
Price: £7.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Tamara Howard

★★★☆☆
★★★☆☆ **6**

UNDER RAPS!

Just for your information, Piranha will, at some point during this year, produce two games, one based around the disgusting **Fungus the Bogeyman**, the other called **Skimmer.** Piranha can't say anything yet regarding plots, programmers or even release dates, but be warned. They're both out there somewhere.

Denton Designs are conjuring up a game that sounds utterly bizarre. Mirrorsoft is using them to produce something by the name of **Fox Fights Back,** about a fox who, well fights back really. "Just imagine this fox being chased by these dogs and instead of running it turns around and blows them away with a machine gun!" said a spokesman.

Following hard on the heels of the scurrilous **Jack the Ripper,** St Brides are now producing a marginally more tasteful game, a superhero adventure involving the exploits of **Wondergirl.** It's sort of **Indiana Jones** 1920's style and will hopefully come complete with a comic book, though it's actually set in 2011. As yet, there's no word on whose label **2011** is coming out, St Brides hope to put together a deal fairly soon.

Fans of the heavily muscled will doubtless be foaming at the mouth at the prospect of a sequel to **He-Man and the Masters of the Universe.** Good news is that one will be out sometime in June from the redoubtable Gremlin, and will be coded by their handpicked In-House people.

Source is hard at work at a game by the cheerful title of **Bedlam.** Despite the obvious connectins, we're completely sure that it won't be a game about a nineteenth century madhouse, but it'll be out on the Go! label as soon as it's finished.

Newsdate: February

Whod

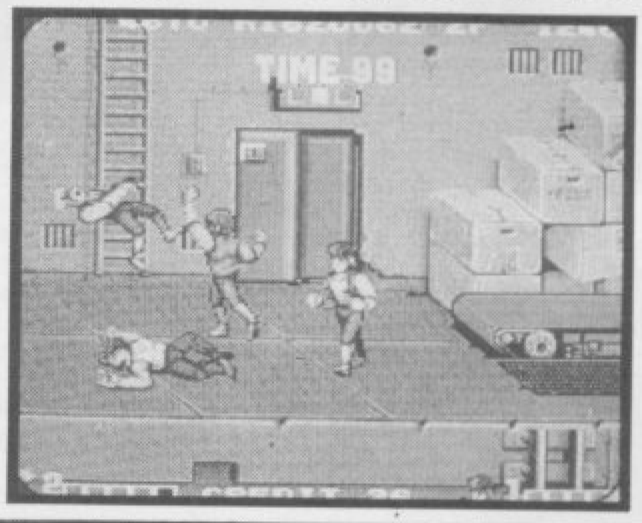
MASTERTRONIC DOES THE DOUBLE

For keen coin-op players Double Dragon **was a major title of '87. A highly popular punch, kick and maim anything in trousers game,** Double Dragon **is believed by many to have been one of the top five earners of 1987.**

Not surprisingly, a great many software houses zoomed in to buy the licence of the game, and there was much surprise when it was announced that Mastertronic had grabbed it. Even more surprising was the way in which it was done.

Mastertronic has recently signed a deal with Technos, the biggest software development house in Japan, and the people originally responsible for Double Dragon. **Although Taito released it as a coin-op, it was actually written by the people at Technos. The deal between the development house and Mastertronic the rights to the conversion of** Double Dragon, **but also to any product that Technos produces over the next two years that is released as an arcade machine. Also involved in the deal is a company called Tradewest, who handle distribution of Technos products, and for Mastertronic's Arcadia label in the States.**

What the deal seems to mean is that Mastertronic will no longer have to deal with people like Taito, Atari, Sega, all the big coin-op distributors. By cutting out the 'middle men' Mastertronic should have greater access to the original codes (a definite plus



Ahem. Here's another marketing ploy. This time, Mirrorsoft is plugging its new wonder **Tetris** for all its worth, with the help of the **Tetris** Challenge. In each game pack, you'll find a form for you to enter your high score. The top ten scorers on each machine in each of ten regions will be entered for the UK Final. (Bit like *Mastermind* really.) The eventual **Tetris** All-Comers Champion will be sent to Russia. (Second prize winner will get a fornight in Russia, hahaha.) Competition closes on the 31st March, get those entries in, etc, etc . . .

Now here's a marketing ploy and a half. In order to promote **Winter Olympiad 88,** Tynesoft is offering everyone who buys the game the chance to enter a competition. First prize to this competition is a trip for two to see the Winter Olympics in Calgary, Canada. Also included is the package will be a leaflet, partly written by David Vine (he of Ski Sunday commentary fame), to explain all about the Olympics themselves.

We're so excited we thought we'd print a picture of David Vine.



Some of you may have been confused by **Gryzor.** To be more precise, by the sticker on the front of the box saying that the tape version was not compatible with the +3. What to do?

Well the answer is this. When **Gryzor** was released, it was found that there were certain incompatibilities between the +2 and +3 which made it impossible to run the tape version on the disc machine. Thus Ocean printed stickers to cover itself, whilst trying to figure out what was wrong. It was solved eventually, so there are now two batches, one that will work with the +3, one that won't. If you have a game with a sticker on, you're in the minority, and actually quite unlucky. In fact, you're double unlucky, because there is a disc version of the game, that retails at £14.95.

Problem, what problem?

Those of you with some spare dosh after Christmas will probably want to spend it. And what better to spend it on than a spanking new +3? There are some odd deals going on at the moment – here is one of the better ones . . .

In an effort to persuade people that they really do want to buy their Spectrum here, many retailers were offering substantial amounts of money off the +3 over the Christmas period. John Menzies, however, decided to keep the £199.99 price mark (boo hiss) but bundled all sorts of goodies with it (nice). And now that New Year's here and prices are creeping up again, Menzies are promising us that, for January at least, the offer will still stand.

So, if you're interested, zoom along to Menzies for a +3, and the following items: the standard Amstrad goodie-giveaway, an Amiga data-recorder, a smart lead to plug to connect said cassette recorder to said +3 (a rare item at the moment), and 3 assorted software titles, which will cary according to which region you live in, but are all guaranteed to be hot stuff.

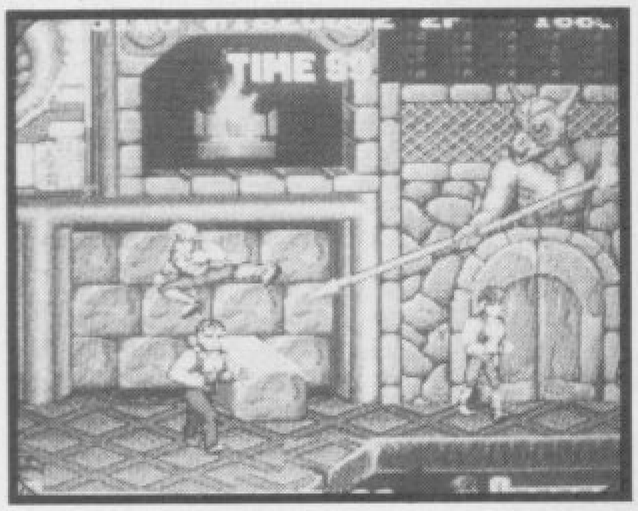
Over the Christmas period people tend to buy more of everything. More food, more Christmas decorations, and, strangely enough, more computers. So we thought we'd take a look at how the Spectrum machines sold over the festive season.

Signs were definitely good. WH

when it comes to the conversion) and, hopefully, a cheaper licence.

It's the first time that a software house has made such an arrangement with a development house, and Mastertronic is sure that it will be good for everyone.

Because of the way coin-ops are marketed however, it's hard to say what will be released under the deal. When Technos has finished coding a game, the product has to be tested thoroughly on site. If the test results are favourable, someone will buy the rights to it,



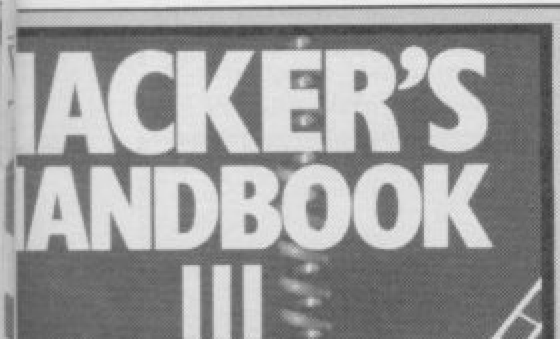
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and it will appear in the arcades. Should the testing go badly, the product is more than likely to be scrapped. So although Technos is working on at least ten titles at the moment, maybe only one of them will actually make it to the arcades.

Mastertronic isn't entirely sure of what titles it'll get. What it can be sure of though, is that anything that Technos writes over the next two years, be it released by CapCom, Taito, Sega or Atari, or any other, instantly becomes Mastertronic's licence property.

All titles will be released through the Melbourne House label, priced at £8.99. Double Dragon is due for release in March, with a second licence following sometime in the early summer. Watch out for copy cat moves among other software houses and development teams any day . . .■



Smith among other retailers reporting that the +2 was highly successful, with the +3 a little bit slower but still selling well. (Smiths were selling the +3 with the free software and joystick package for the recommended £199.99 price). As far as software went, Smiths say that top sellers were **Combat School** (Ocean), **Out Run** (US Gold) and **Match Day II** (Ocean) as being the big sellers of Chrimbo, with the many and varied compilations available also doing brisk trade.

● Possibly the least boring most controversial computer book ever to be written, and certainly one of the best selling, *The Hacker's Handbook*, has now been revised for the second time.

The Hacker's Handbook III will be published on the 21 January, priced at the very reasonable sum of £6.95. All the information you've ever wanted about how to break into other people's computer network, bizarre interesting case histories, court cases including what happened when some bright spark tuned into Prince Phillip's personal information. Hook up that elderly modem now!

● More news of arcade licences from US Gold's spin off label GO!

Firstly there's **Halls of Kairos,** a classic tale (so we're told) of good and evil. Gameplay is reputedly a combination of the well overdue **Ikari Warriors** and **Exploding Fist,** the main idea being to punch things. There's a door in your way, punch things. There's a bloke in the way, punch him. Punch yourself if you get bored. Here's a screen shot anyway.

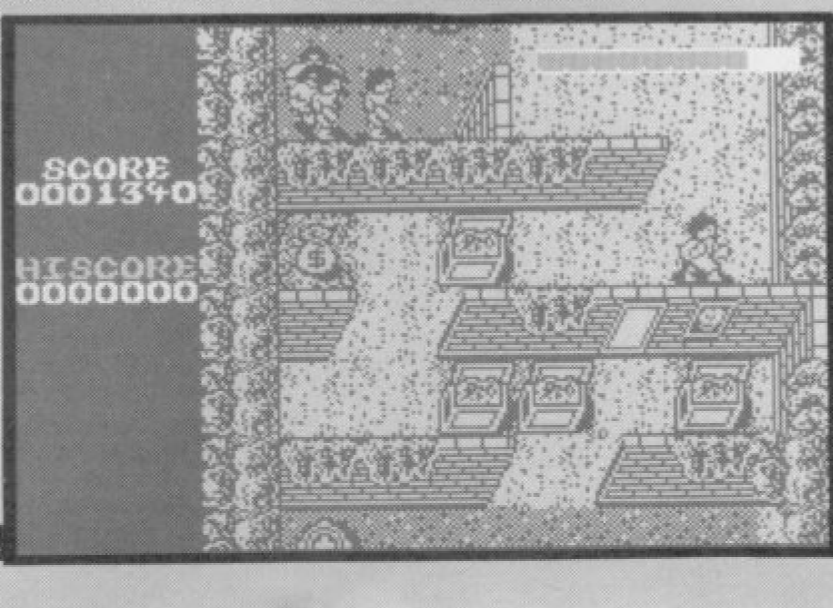
Secondly there's **Shackled,** which appears to be yet another game about a warrior that time forgot in fur boxers. Gameplay sounds vaguely **Gauntlet**-y, with one or more players battling to free friends from prison. Bonuses will include extra weapons (all colour coded for extra point value), keys and lots and lots of co-operation between players to get through the game.

Both are coming soon to a magazine hear you.

M·A·D MASTERTRONIC X

● On a slightly odd note, Mastertronic's upper class budget label is now no more. MAD has now been replaced completely with a new label, known as MAD X, which costs exactly the same, £2.99. And if you're thinking that this is a complete waste of time, you're totally wrong.

The X stands for extra, because on the B side of every game, there's another game! Some of them will be re-releases, some original, but either way, MAD X promise to give you two completely different games, each time. The first release, **Energy Warrior/Molecule Man** should already be with us, with **Rockford/Rockman** due out any day now. Sound a bit-but-not-completely-like recent Codemasters moves to us. Some connection?



TWTMTW
THAT WAS THE MONTH THAT WAS

That Was the Editor That Was

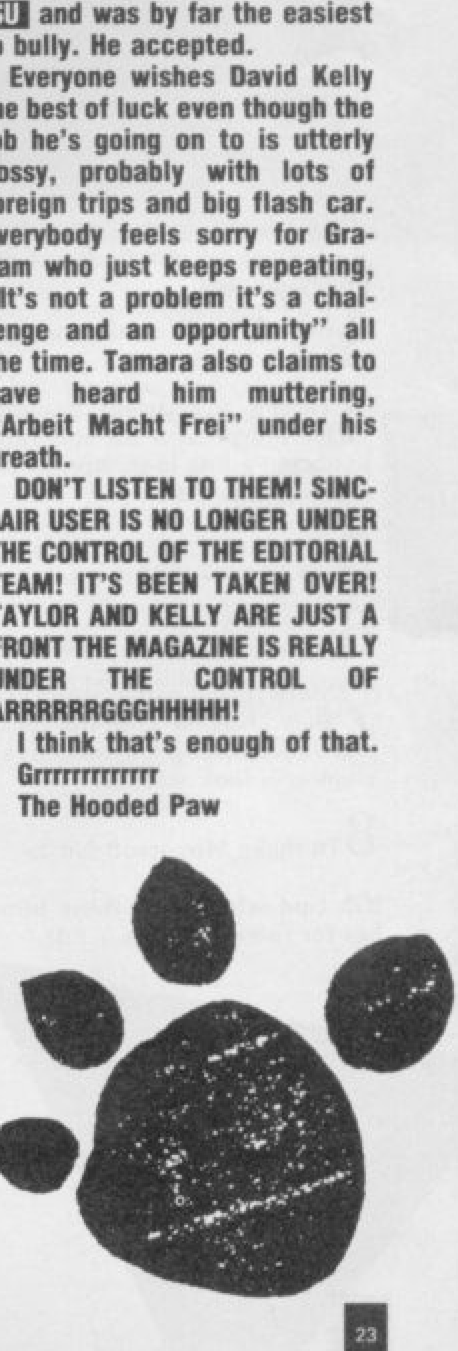
David Kelly legendary Editor of SU is no more. That is, he's perfectly well (apart from a bit of a cough) but he's gone away – on to other, more serious, almost certainly more lucrative things. David Kelly was not only a marvellous human being who transformed Sinclair User into the totally wonderful reading experience it is now, David Kelly also looked more like Bob Dylan than anyone else in the industry. How many people can say as much?

Anyway the rest of the stray, runaways and urchins who make up the SU team drew lots and examined entrails, looked for signs in the sky and decided Graham Taylor would get the short straw. Graham T. was Deputy Editor on the Starship SU and was by far the easiest to bully. He accepted.

Everyone wishes David Kelly the best of luck even though the job he's going on to is utterly dossy, probably with lots of foreign trips and big flash car. Everybody feels sorry for Graham who just keeps repeating, "It's not a problem it's a challenge and an opportunity" all the time. Tamara also claims to have heard him muttering, "Arbeit Macht Frei" under his breath.

DON'T LISTEN TO THEM! SINCLAIR USER IS NO LONGER UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE EDITORIAL TEAM! IT'S BEEN TAKEN OVER! TAYLOR AND KELLY ARE JUST A FRONT THE MAGAZINE IS REALLY UNDER THE CONTROL OF ARRRRRRGGGHHHHH!

I think that's enough of that.
Grrrrrrrrrrrr
The Hooded Paw



And so the time of year comes around when, stuffed to overflowing with turkey and spirits, Industry Figures sit back in their armchairs with their big, fat cigars and decide what you'll be playing next Christmas. Now it's not every day that you get the chance to quiz The Biz's top nobs as to what they're up to, so we decided it was time we had a word. The result? Well . . .

GAMES 1988

THE EIGHT VITAL QUESTIONS

1 WHAT WAS THE BEST THING THAT HAPPENED IN 1988?
2 ARE YOU PLEASED WITH THE +3?
3 NOW THERE IS TO BE A +2+ (AS REPORTED IN THE JAN ISSUE) WHAT EFFECT, IF ANY, DO YOU THINK IT WILL HAVE ON THE MARKET?
4 WITH THE PRICE GAP BETWEEN THE 16 BIT ST AND AMIGA MACHINES AND THE SPECTRUM NARROWING, WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE SPECTRUM MARKET? BUDGET ONLY?
5 WHAT WILL BE THE DRAMATIC TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN '88?
6 WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST SHOCK OR SURPRISE OF 1987?
7 ARCADE LICENCES WERE VERY MUCH THE FASHIONABLE GAMES LAST YEAR, HAVING TAKEN OVER FROM THE FILM TIE-INS OF '86. WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL BE THE 'IN THING' OF '88?
8 WHAT WAS YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION?

John Cook/ Tom Watson *(Mirrorsoft)*

1 We joined Mirrorsoft.



2 Our local Dixon's ran out, so it must be good. It's a bit pricey, though.

3 Sounds like a mediocre marketing move to us.

4 There's a constant demand for full-price 8 bit software, so it's not going to go budget for a good while yet.

5 Try us next year.

6 Wake us up when it happens.

7 More of the same, unfortunately, but as coin-op hardware develops Spectrum conversions will look weaker.

8 To make Mirrorsoft No 1.

(Oh God who asked these bimbos for their thoughts – Ed).



Andrew Hewson *(Hewson Consultants/ Rackit)*

1 **Exolon** for Hewson and the PCW Show for the industry. There was less bullshit and more professionalism this year. The market is finally maturing.

2 Yes and no. There are the problems with compatibility, of course, and it's a year late, although as a machine it's fine.

3 That sounds like wringing blood out of a stone. It's good for Amstrad commercially, but the public is going to get annoyed with the – inevitable – compatibility problems.

4 The Spectrum market won't go entirely budget. There's still a point where a game feels worthy of a £9.99 tag.

5 There's still lots of scope to exploit colour and sound software-wise. There'll be another re-packaging of the machine at the end of the year, though I don't know quite what shape that will take.

6 The success of compilations in the run-up to Christmas.

7 Probably licences like **Trivial Pursuit** or **Blockbusters**, drawn from a wider range of media.

8 To cut down on beer.

Gary Bracey *(Ocean Software)*

1 Our success. We finally got rid of the **Knight-Rider** reputation and sorted out our schedules.

2 There was a bit of muted response, but as a machine, I'm happy with it. Anything that creates a new interest is good.

3 Great – if the price is okay, it's long overdue.

4 The market won't go entirely budget. The userbase is so huge that you can't afford not produce full-price stuff for the Spectrum.

5 Transputers will finally arrive. Atari are working on one. They can do things thousands of times faster than anything else around at the moment. Disc-only software is unlikely to appear 'til +3 sales pick up.



▲ *Gary Bracey – Mr 'White Teeth' 87 with the two runners-up*

6 Finding myself misquoted in CTW.

7 Original designs will be coming back. But films will still be popular. We've got **Platoon** and **Robocop**.

8 To give up smoking, but that didn't last.

Geoff Heath *(Mastertronic)*

1 Getting the **Milk Race** off the ground. It's the first major tie-in Mastertronic has done. It sold well too. Acquiring Melbourne House, and going into partnership with Virgin were exciting moves too.

2 Yes. We took the initiative to release compilations at £9.99, and they're going down well.

3 I'm not sure about that one. I can't say I'm overwhelmed. I'm sure it's only a matter of time before someone brings out a cut-down Spectrum as a games console.

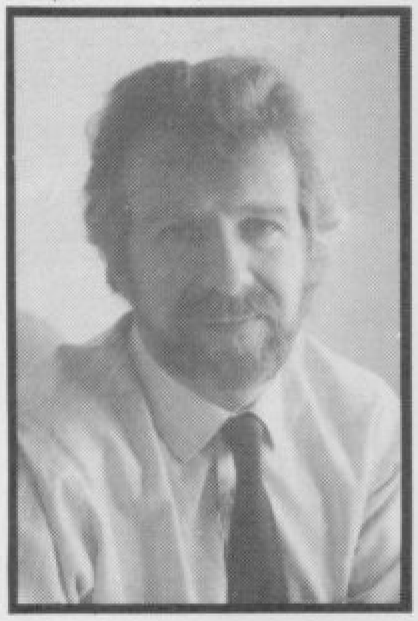
4 Yes. Towards the end of the summer/autumn, the market will go that way. The 16 bit machines will sell well, but the Spectrum has such a huge following that it will be alive for some time yet.

5 Not really. Amstrad will continue to push their discs.

6 No big shocks this year.

7 Again, the arcades will be fashionable, but most of the back-catalogue has now been snapped up. Our Arcadia machines are doing well. (Arcadia is Mastertronic's own range of coin-ops, which are converted to the micros after a stint in the arcades – Ed).

8 To be more direct. (Wah? – Ed.)



David Martin *(Martech)*

1 The industry continued to grow – and we're still in business!

2 Er, yes. It has to be said that I think we've nearly squeezed everything there is out of the machines, so discs are the only apparent progression.

3 It sounds pretty obscure. I'm puzzled by that one. I think it's time for something new.

4 No. Although the budget market will grow, there's still a place for full priced software, but it will have to be very special. With any luck people will start using their discs properly, instead of just releasing compilations.

5 I hope there isn't any! We've only just managed to get to grips with exploiting the machines around at the moment. I imagine Amstrad may be doing something 16 bitty.

6 Can't think of anything at the moment . . .

7 Arcades again, I'm afraid. It's a ready-made market. Perhaps some of the style of games from a while ago may come back, like sports simulations. They died out a while back, but with more advanced programming, a new angle could be tried.

8 To get our games out on time



▲ *David Martin with his latest zap-'em-up game programmer*

Ian Stewart *(Gremlin Graphics)*

1 Well, there was the signing of the arms treaty, and of course we established ourselves as the No 3 software house, which were both pretty good.



2 I wouldn't say we were particularly happy. Amstrad really should have taken a few more steps forward before releasing another machine. It doesn't really offer much flexibility.

3 +2+?! They're flogging it to death, aren't they? We definitely need a new start of some sort.

4 I don't think the market will go entirely 16 bit. There has got to be a drastic price reduction, though. Around £69-£79 would be right for the Spec. That way there would be a resurgence of 48K material. There still isn't enough exploitation of 128K, though.

5 People will be building on last year's developments. Most of the programs released this year will probably be written on 16 bit machines and then ported down.

6 The biggest surprise was that sales-wise, there wasn't the expected summer slump. In previous years software has been very scarce at this time, but not this **year**.

7 Coin-ops are still going to dominate. It's a bit of a shame, as their success detracts from the time and effort put into original products. Of our releases planned for 88, the majority will be original.

8 I think it was not to work so hard, but trying to hold off BT and Activision may exclude that.

Richard Tidsall *(US Gold)*

1 The PCW Show was very exciting. Our stand was the best so far, and everyone loved the **Outrun** machine.

2 Yes. We'll have to sit back and see what happens. We'll support it fully, if it sells.

3 That's not very exciting. I can't see a great deal of point in that.

4 The market may gradually become budget-orientated, but not for a good while yet. We're certainly sticking to our guns.

5 Amstrad are probably working on a 16 bit machine. I can't see anything happening on the technology front Spectrum-wise, unless it's something out of the blue.

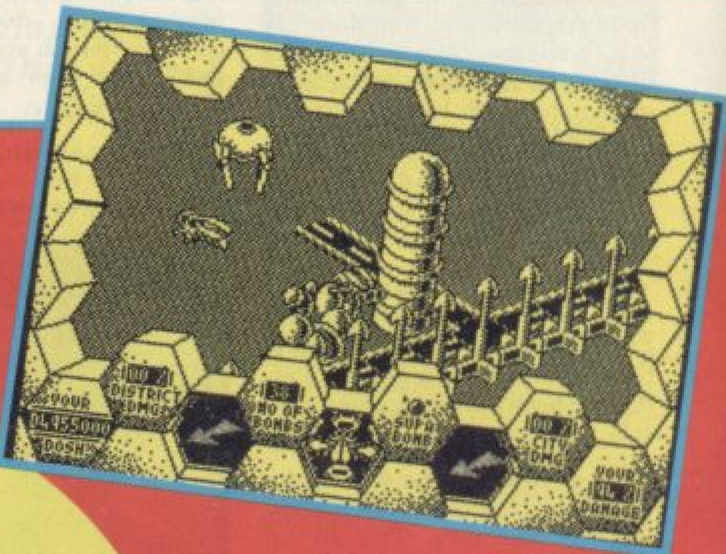
6 Jim Douglas' review of **Bravestarr.** Enough said.

7 Coin-ops will still be strong. They're generally more successful than films, because it's difficult to attain a film's atmosphere, and there's a ready-made audience for a coin-op.

8 I think it was to think up better replies for yearly prediction poles. I will try to decide definitely whether to have a moustach or not.







WIN +3 DISCS





THE COUPON

Tick the appropriate boxes on the coupon, fill in your name, address and shoe size and send the thing off to: "Disc-thing is bigger than both of us Compo", SU Competition Mega Control, 14 Holkham Road, Orton, Peterborough. Don't send it to us in London – we'll throw it in the bin.

Name............................

Address.........................

....

Shoe Size.......................

Answers:

1 a ☐ b ☐ c ☐ d ☐ e ☐

2 a ☐ b ☐ c ☐ d ☐ e ☐

3 a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

If you're one of the hundreds upon thousands of lucky, lucky people who were given a +3 for Chrimble, then I bet you're well chuffed with yourself now aren't you? Prancing about, playing with the latest piece of hardware, the envy of all your friends, having a great old time loading up all your games in 2.3 seconds flat, zapping things an' solvin' things an' . . .

Wot? You mean to say you've got a +3, all that hardware, and you haven't got any discs? Well, I blame it on the parents myself. Stop that blubbing then, Auntie SU'll put it right.

Contrary to popular belief, there's quite a bit of disc software about at the moment, and **Mastertronic** are the people behind some of the best of it. They've put together three compilations, each of three games, and they're great! Play three Sports games, three Arcade games, or three of **Mastertronic's** Greatest Hits. And because **Mastertronic** are so generous, we're giving away fifty of the things, and you can choose which one you'd like.

THE PRIZES:

So's you can choose which disc is going to be your fave, here's what they got on 'em . . .

PLUS 3 HITS:
Feud
Amaurote
Hypabowl

PLUS 3 ARCADE:
Motos
Bosconian
Angleball

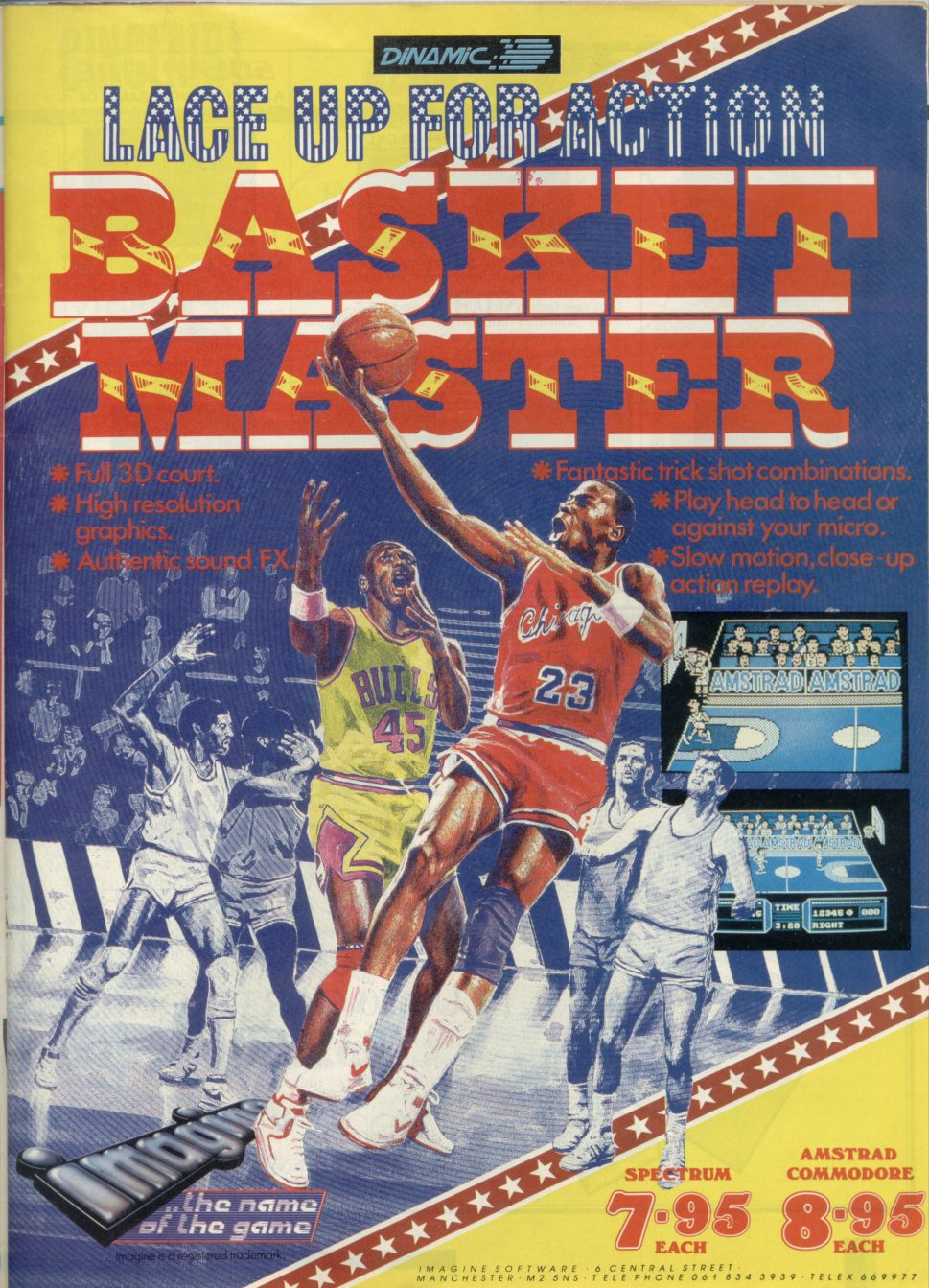
PLUS 3 SPORTS:
Bump, Set, Spike
Strike!
Speed King 2

THE COMPETITION:

1 How big is a Spectrum +3 disc?
a) 2.8″ b) 3″ c) 3.5″ d) 5.5″ e) 11.6″

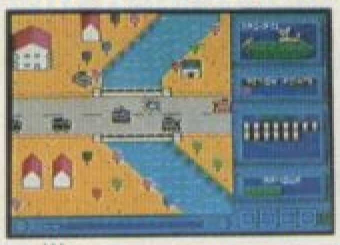
2 How many disc drives does a Spectrum +2 have?
a) 1 b) 2 c) 3 d) 12 e) None, it's the +3 that's got the disc drive dingbat!

3 Which disc do you want?
a) HITS b) ARCADE c) SPORTS


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LACE UP FOR ACTION
BASKET MASTER
* Full 3D court.
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* Authentic sound FX.
* Fantastic trick shot combinations.
* Play head to head or against your micro.
* Slow motion, close-up action replay.
AMSTRAD AMSTRAD
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12345
RIGHT
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...the name of the game
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COMMODORE
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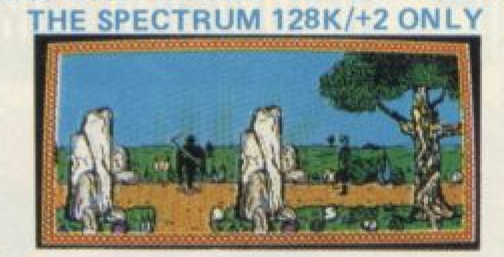


D) GAME: 48K/+, 2 maps, 2 scenarios, booklet £7.95

E) GAME: 128K/+2, 2 maps, 2 scenarios, booklet, extra option. £7.95

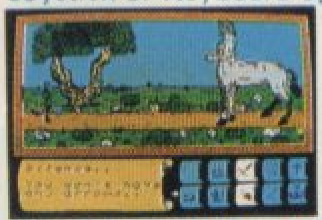
DRAGONIA

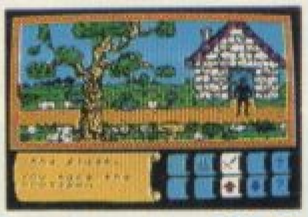
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- Brew and cast your own spells, communicate, load/save facility etc. All 128K used.
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- Explore the Shadowlands, Forest of the Undead, Doomlands, and the Citadel of Hope.

Joystick or Keyboard option.





F) DRAGONIA: 128K/+2 only : £11.95

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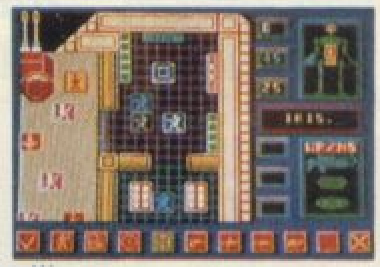
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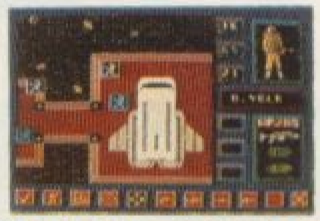
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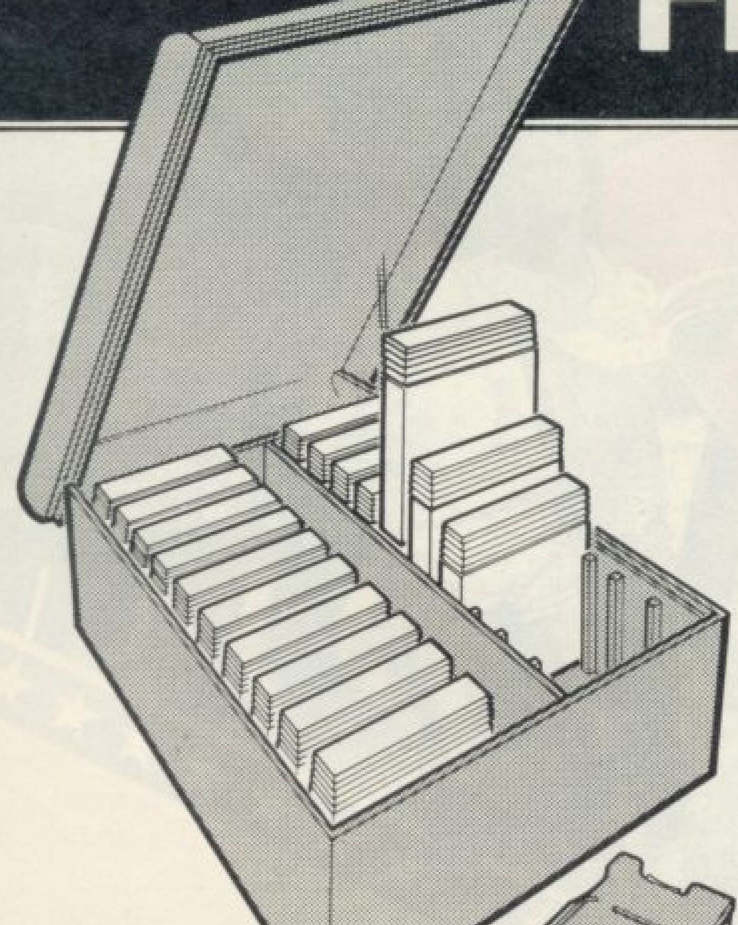


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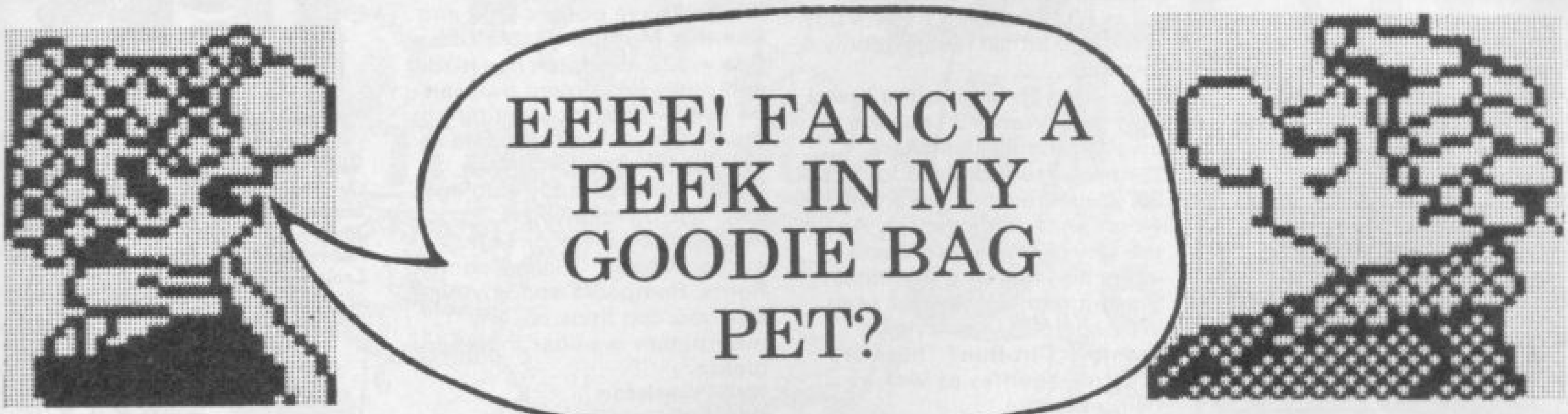
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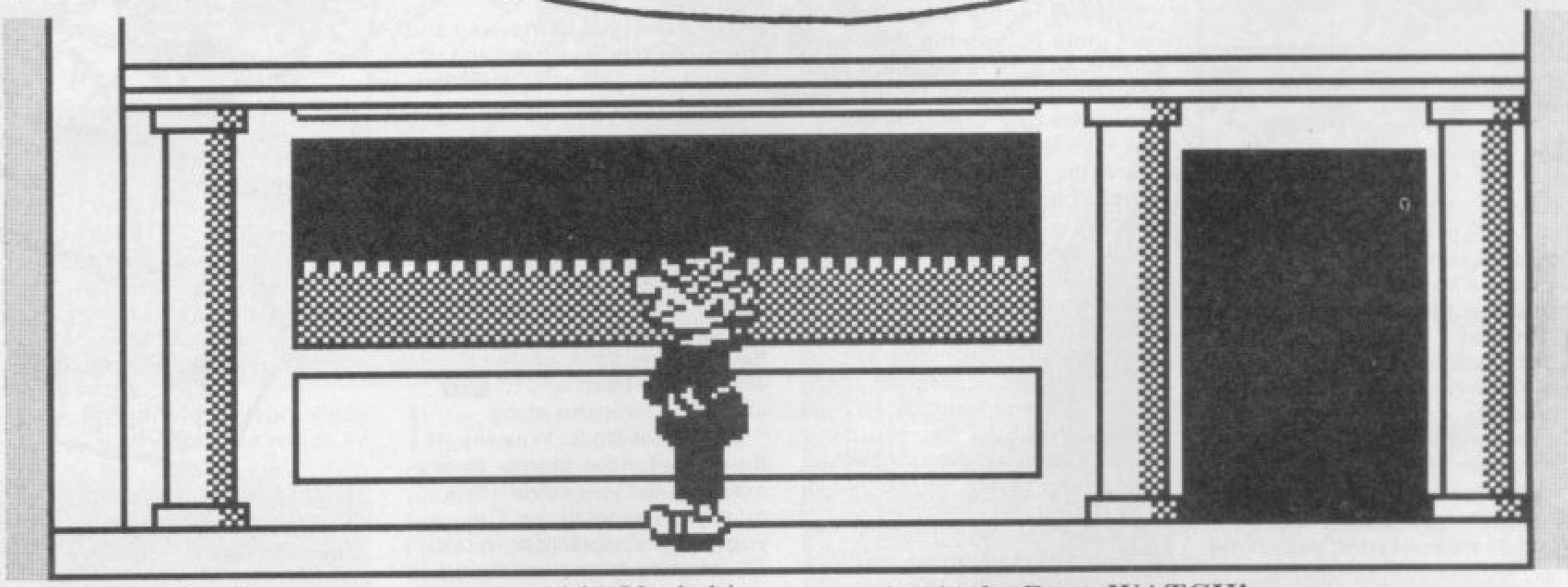
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COMPETITION





Eee. You know where you stand in Yorkshire. If your name's Andy Capp, it's probably in the pub. All of them fags and flat 'ats and pints'o'bitter. Magic.

Mirrorsoft, being the sort of company keen to shed light on even the most mysterious anthropological groups (come on, how many people have you *actually* met like A. Capp esq?) have assembled a genuine taste of life as seen by the inhabitants of the Daily Mirror comic strip, especially for the likes of you lucky, lucky SU readers?

Just in case you have been unfortunate enough never to have come across Andy, a rough description of his day would entail getting up (around midday), going to the pub after an obligatory stand-up row with his wife Flo, drinking bitter, having lots of fags and chatting up his bit-on-the-side, the barmaid of The Pub, Dianne, going home and 'aving t'tea etc etc.

A true, fair and accurate account of life north of Watford, obviously.

Of ocurse, what with Andy Capp being a virtual sex symbol – all that rugged appeal and nicotine (drive women loopy) – you'll want to emulate him in as close a fashion as possible. Apart from smoking, of course.

And what better way to do it than by entering our fab competition and getting yourself one of the amazing Andy goody-bags.

What we've got:

25 Andy Capp Fab Goody Packs including:

An Andy Capp WATCH!
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An Andy Capp PINT GLASS! (really)
An Andy Capp IRON-ON T-SHIRT TRANSFER

and 75 runners-up prizes of **TRANSFERS** and **POSTERS.**

And all you have to do in order to get hold of this totally northern collection is answer the questions on the form below and send your answers to: How Many Men Do You Know Like This? Competition, 14 Holkham Road, Orton, Peterborough PE2 0UF. Closing date February 10th.

The Questions:

1) Is Andy Capp (a) A faithful representation of a Northern Soul
(b) A suspicious stereotype
(c) A real person

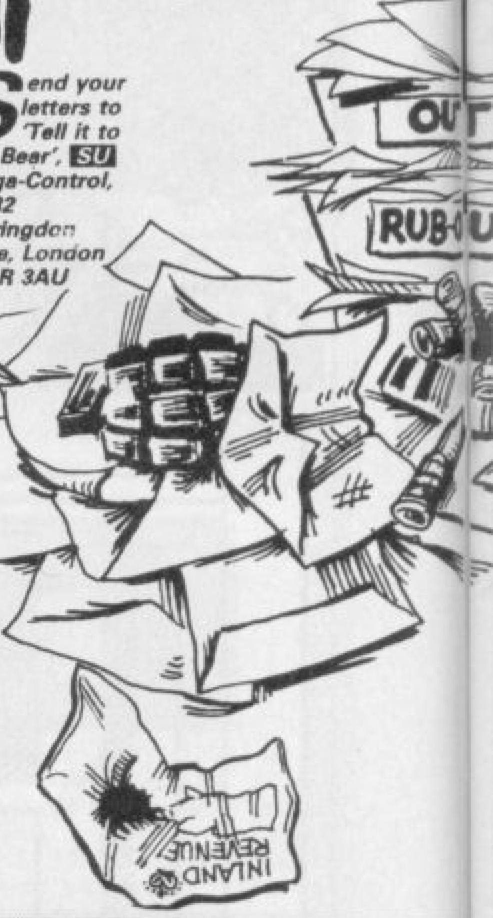
2) James Bolam (who is about to play Andy in a TV series) was the owner of a ridiculous northern accent in a programme about fishing. Name the show.

3) Who won the 1966 world Cup?

The Coupon:

1) a[ ] b[ ] c[ ]
2)..
3)..
Name ....
Address ....
....

TELL IT



Send your letters to 'Tell it to the Bear', **SU** Mega-Control, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU

After reading page 60 of **SU**, December 87, I bought a +3 and the **Scrabble de Luxe** – because I love Scrabble! But I was so disgusted with the graphics!

Have you ever seen the Psion tape? That is so good – looks like a Scrabble board, buit it does only have just 11,000 words. Why can't Psion have a disc with increased word memory?



Really I spent £216 after reading your page, and now I find myself returning to my old ZX+ – what a waste of money!
John Daniel
Portweal
Mid Glamorgan
● *Jeez! What's with you? We printed a screenshot of the game on the page, and you complain about the graphics, and why anyone would spend so much money only to play one game is beyond me.*

I am having great difficulties in finding games for my Spectrum +3. You advertise many in **SU** each month, but you don't say where they can be bought. Please can I order direct from you or from the manufacturers who advertise in your magazine, or perhaps you can give me a list of suppliers in my area? I buy your magazine every month and enjoy it very much.
Kris Price
Pontypridd
Mid-Glamorgan
● *You and every other +3 owner, Kris. Until these software houses get their act together and start releasing real +3 games instead of just compilations, you're pretty much stuck. Check out the feature elsewhere this issue in the meantime though.*

I have recently noticed you lack of features. No special features on hardware, large previews or other. But in the November issue I noticed several features. 10 free poke cards, the review of **Dark Sceptre** (stand back in amazement) and Plus 3 disc converts (Mega Wow!). No can you keep the good work up? Hope so **SU**. Brilliant mag otherwise and great reviews. Ten stars are great!
Andrew Malloy
PS Please print my letter.
PPS I'm a real groveller!
● *Uh-hah.*

I have been an avid reader of **SU** for two years now but over the last few months you have been letting your high standards slip. For instance the joystick review promised for issue 69 turned out to be a tiny one page artical reviewin only 4 joysticks.

As I am an owner of a brand new Sepctrum +3 I eagerly awaited the disc software reviews also promised for issue 69. These reviews were even worse than the joysticks. Again the artical was in black and white and featured the most borring games I've ever seen. Why could'nt you review **Trantor? Out Run?** These are both new games as well as being on disc.

Looking on the bright side (yes there is one) the *Preview* section of **SU** is excellent and so is *Gremlin*, witch by the way should be given more space. I just love the Kamikazi bear character, he is fabulous and should be featured in his own cartoon. The Pokes are pretty good but Jon Riglar should be given the sack as he is borring and spoils the *Zap Chat* section. Apart from the spelling mistakes (a few of witch are in this letter) your computer mag is the best one around!!!
Peter Jones
Nice to know you could find something to like, Peter.

As I was looking through your mag I noticed that in your charts section **Exolon** had lost its 'Classic'. I searched around for a bit and finally found it and terrible shock it was too! Drab old **Road Runner** had pinched it!

I was flabbergasted and I should thing a lot of other people were too! Give **Exolon** back its 'Classic' PLEASE. I will be very hurt if you don't.
Charles Roper
Sedlescombe
Battle, E Sussex
● *Well spotted, Charles (smarty-pants). Let's hope nobody else noticed.*



Has anyone out there got a poke for **Dan Dare** that gives you infinite time, invincibility or both? I want one because every time I get to Level 3, after all that hard work* it is oh! so maddening to be zapped by the Mean Treens and kiss goodbye to all that time, and eventually lose completely.

I'm sure I speak for many other people (including my best friend) and I would be really grateful if you could come up with a poke.
Iaine Gray
Kings Heath
Birmingham
*Not entirely true.
● *Worra sad story. Even sadder tho', is the fact that we dun a poke last ish. So push off.*

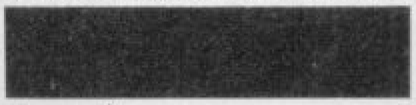
I have just bought a Spectrum 128+2 mainly for revision but cannot find any software to use. Could you please tell me where I could get some software for revision please?

Also I have bought **SU** and find that **Multiprints, Multiface One + 128, Wriggler,** hex loader and other equipment that can be used with my computer are meaningless. I am pleading to you for information on the things I have already siad and also disc drives, wafers, microdrives, what sort of printer is best? Genie, Robotex, Roms, Rampacks and anything else you can think of. Any information is better than none please.
Neil Poppleton
Bradford
●*Get to the back of the mag and check out the classified ads. If anyone can help you, this is where you'll find them.*

I have but two complaints, and neither of them are about Tamara Howard.

Complaint No 1: Who's stupid idea was it to print the Frogs Competition on BLACK paper? It was extremely lucky that I had my bottle of Tipp-Ex handy at the time, or there would have been bits of **SU** littered all over the place.

Complaint No 2: Why (apart from the obvious money saving exercise) did you advertise a money-off voucher for The Edge or Ace's **Executor** in issue 68, referring to the review on page 24, which was, in fact, US Gold's effort, **720°**. And, on the



Coupon ▲

same coupon (I haven''t finished yet), the price on the coupon was £6.99, while on the 'buy this game 'cos it's got money off' bit, you said (I'm really enjoying this) it was only £6.45, and you printed it twice and I bet you didn't even notice it, pah!

Apart from these two minor grievances, I think **SU** is brill, and is much better than your grotty, how shall I put this, C***H, or is it T***H? I never can remember. And Tamara's reviews are quite good really, but then I am an avid **Oink** fan!
Chris Thompson
Blackpool
Lancs
● *Okay, okay, so there were a few errors. The black coupon was merely an initiative test.*

I totally disagree with your so-called review of **Rolling Thunder.** I think your reviewers are totally round the bend so get your act together! I'll never buy your mag again unless yuou change your review. It should look like this:

4+6=10 stars for a brill game.
Lee Edwards
Address completely unreadable I'm afraid
*What sort of a stunt you think you're trying to pull here boy? We ain't even reviewed **Rolling Thunder** yet! You're mad. Go away.*

I hope I'm not being rude, but I was at my friend's house the other day, and we were playing **720°** on his C64. And I was shocked. The full colour graphics were astounding, most Spectrum games, or 99% of them it seems sometimes, are only about four colours. Can you tell me why this is?

And can you also tell me if **Skate or Die** from Electronic Arts is coming out on Spectrum?
Patrick Gould
Woodhouse
Sheffield
●*No. You're not being rude. Many people would have thought that since Mr Sugar has brought out a couple of 'new' machines since he bought out Sinclair, he could have done something about the lack of colour. Apparently not.*

*As for **Skate or Die,** yes it will be out, though heaven knows only knows when.*

TO THE BEAR!



You got a comment? You got something to say? You got an opinion about what's good and bad. Wanna praise the mag? Wanna heap some indignation and kick a few butts? Don't keep it to yourself, just put your thoughts down on paper and TELL IT TO THE BEAR!

Kamikaze don't mess around. I'll print anything that got something to say with a name and address on it (No address no printy yellowbelly) you jus tell me all about it and send your message to 'Tell it to the Bear', SU Central, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU

Last month a letter from Andy Luty was printed in which he said he felt 'cheated and disgusted' about the fact that SU had not sent him a cheque for ten pounds, so I thought I'd clear up a few points:
a) Originally, a guy called Stuart Saint wrote in to offer £10 to anybody who could beat his high score on **Bombjack**. This was quite obviously ridiculous because any slug could write in and claim the cash. For this reason I deliberately omitted Stuart's address and the general idea was that anybody who actually wrote in, simply had their name printed in the column. Mr Luty's name was one of the many that appeared.



b) **Bombjack** was considered to be too old to be included as a Big Eight feature and so the normal table of high scores did not appear and therefore there were no winners. Mr Luty, however, believes that there was such a table in **Zapchat** and that he was included. Ridiculous!
c) Both these points prove that Mr Luty has in actual fact not won a competition at all. If he took the trouble to read the article, correctly in the first place, perhaps he would not be so confused.

Next!

Jon Riglar
Sinclair User

● *Nuff said.*

It was a rainy Sunday afternoon. I was sitting outside getting wet (like you normally do when there's rain falling on you!), when suddenly I had an idea! (Cue fanfare!) I had been thinking about writing to you (sniff, sniff, something's burning) for a couple of months, and so decided to get them out. (Er, the pen and paper, stupid)! I wanted to produce a straight to the point, serious letter, so here goes.

Ahem. Although I think your mag is brill and your reviews are even briller (?!) I think that reviews written by a younger member of the British public (namely moi!) would be a great asset to your mag, and would be fantastically recieved by the public who are insane enough to be SU readers.

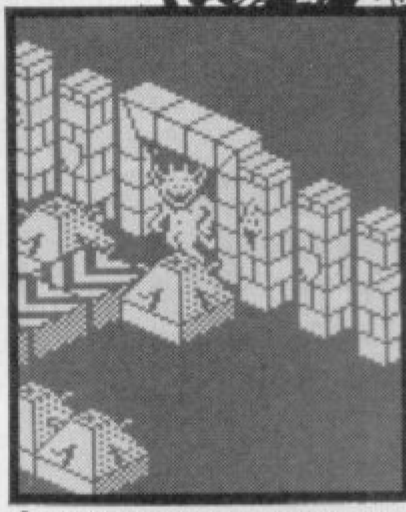
I can spel wel (spell well?) and have an excellent sense of humour. (There was an Englishman, an Irishman and a Scotsman . . . Doing!!!! OK, own up, who hit me with a fraying pan)?

Anyway, I am aged fourteen years, 7 months, 6 days, 10 hours, 3 minutes and 5 seconds . . . 8, 9, 10 . . .

Please read this letter if possible and write back to me as soon as possible.

Andrew Fox
Thetford
Norfolk

● *Anyone can have a go at Sinclair User reviewing (except Jeffrey ARcher, thank you very much) so pick a game, hammer out 200 words and send it in. If you're any good, we'll try and get back to you. Don't hold your breath, though.*



I'm writing to you to clear up some points raised in your review of **3D Game Maker** in your December issue of SU. Firstly: In the 3rd part of the **3D Game Maker,** there is an options displayed on the menu, which, I may add, is highlighted, which is 'save game to tape'. Part 3 is designed to allow the user to play test his or her game. They then press the desired option to save the game to tape, and are prompted to enter the name they wish to call 'their' game. They are then asked to provide a copyright message for 'their' adventure, their name for instance. They now will be prompted to insert a blank tape, to save 'their' adventure. Two files will save to tape, and this is now a 'totally independent self-running game' with the users' own copyright name and program name. This independent game requires no more interaction with the **3D Game Maker,** and I hasten to add that the user is free to market and distribute the program to anyone, all we ask is that somewhere, he/she gives us a mention on the inlay.

Also, I might add, there are few things missing from the program, which you mentioned, but I'm sure the user would rather have these missing than rather do without the whole program.

I trust you will correct or amend the review carried in your magazine.

Graham Mason
Programmer – CRL
On behalf of Mike Hodges

*Chris Jenkins replies: Thanks for making that point, which obviously significantly improves the **3D Game Maker's** rating. In my defence, I'd just say that the manual is unclear on this point; I tried to load the freestanding game without success, and wrongly assumed that the main program was always needed to run the games.*

Please can you give me some information about Games-Making Programs. I saw a review of the **3D Game Maker** from **CRL** (SU December 87) and I was wondering if any other firms make good Games Makers ie for platform games, shoot-'em-up with gravitational pull games and so one.

If you could give me this information, including the prices, I would be most greatful.

Neil English
Lowestoft
Suffolk

● *OK – so the answer's like this. We don't know of 'em, but we're sure they're out there. So if you is a software house, write an' tell us 'bout your Games-Makers.*



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720°
"720° is the epitome of a classic. It's got every element of a great game. U.S. Gold's finest hour." Sinclair User November 1987
"It's so playable and addictive. One of the most imaginative games to emerge this year." Crash December 1987
"Fans of the arcade original and novices alike should have this playable and addictive game." Games Machine December 1987
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Garfield

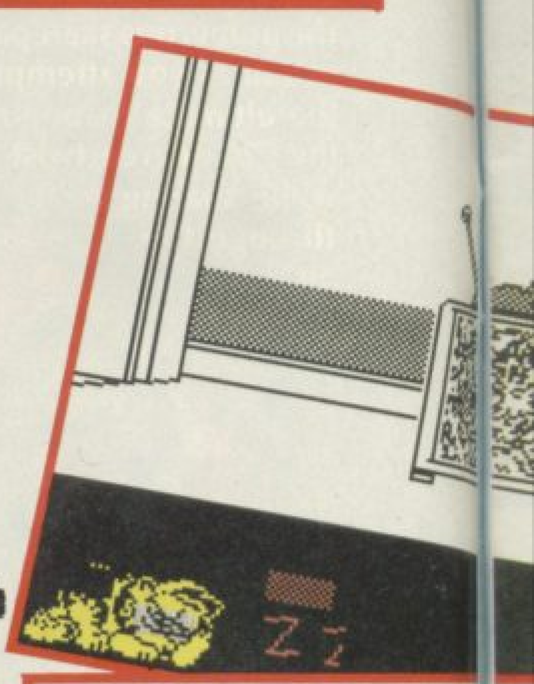
There have been quite a few licences based on cartoon characters and some of the more recent ones have faithfully created the general look of the character – **Yogi Bear** springs to mind. **Garfield** goes beyond that, Garfield doesn't just look a bit like Garfield in some general sort of way – Garfield looks exactly, expression by expression, mood by mood, moment by moment, right. The plot is right too – the gameplay has been intelligently based around themes from the cartoon. The overall plot has Garfield trying to rescue his sometime girlfriend Arlene from the city pound. The game requires Garfield a) to stay awake b) to keep eating c) to kick Oddie – the most ludicrous dog in the world and d) to get around to actually figuring things out and finding his way to the city pound. Getting out the front door is going to be a good start . . . Bewildered owner John is here, ever the innocent he plays almost no part in the plot though, being too stupid to understand the mighty plans of cats and dogs.

Imagine the comic strip brought to life – that's the game, some visual details are sparse but all the graphics are big. Garfield the cartoon is renowned for his wide range of expressive gestures, they're all here – check out the cheesy smile, the gigantic and grotesque 'eating face' (too horrible to be described here – imagine a mouth and nothing else), check out the looks of disgust, of indifference – not Oddie's dumb surprise at being kicked across the room yet again . . . The game is mostly black and white of course, but there are touches of colour where that doesn't lead to yucky attribute clash.

Garfield the sprite can walk, jump, pick up likely looking objects, use or eat them and kick – this last one is (fortunately) so necessary you have to do it over and over again – watching Oddie hurtle through the air is one of computer software's best violent moments.

There are assorted useful objects around – some of them are obviously for eating (Garfield starts to look very sick if he gets hungry or if he exerts himself too much) others, like the torch, have obvious uses, try it in the cellar which contains other things besides rats . . . though the rats, it should be said are pretty cute.

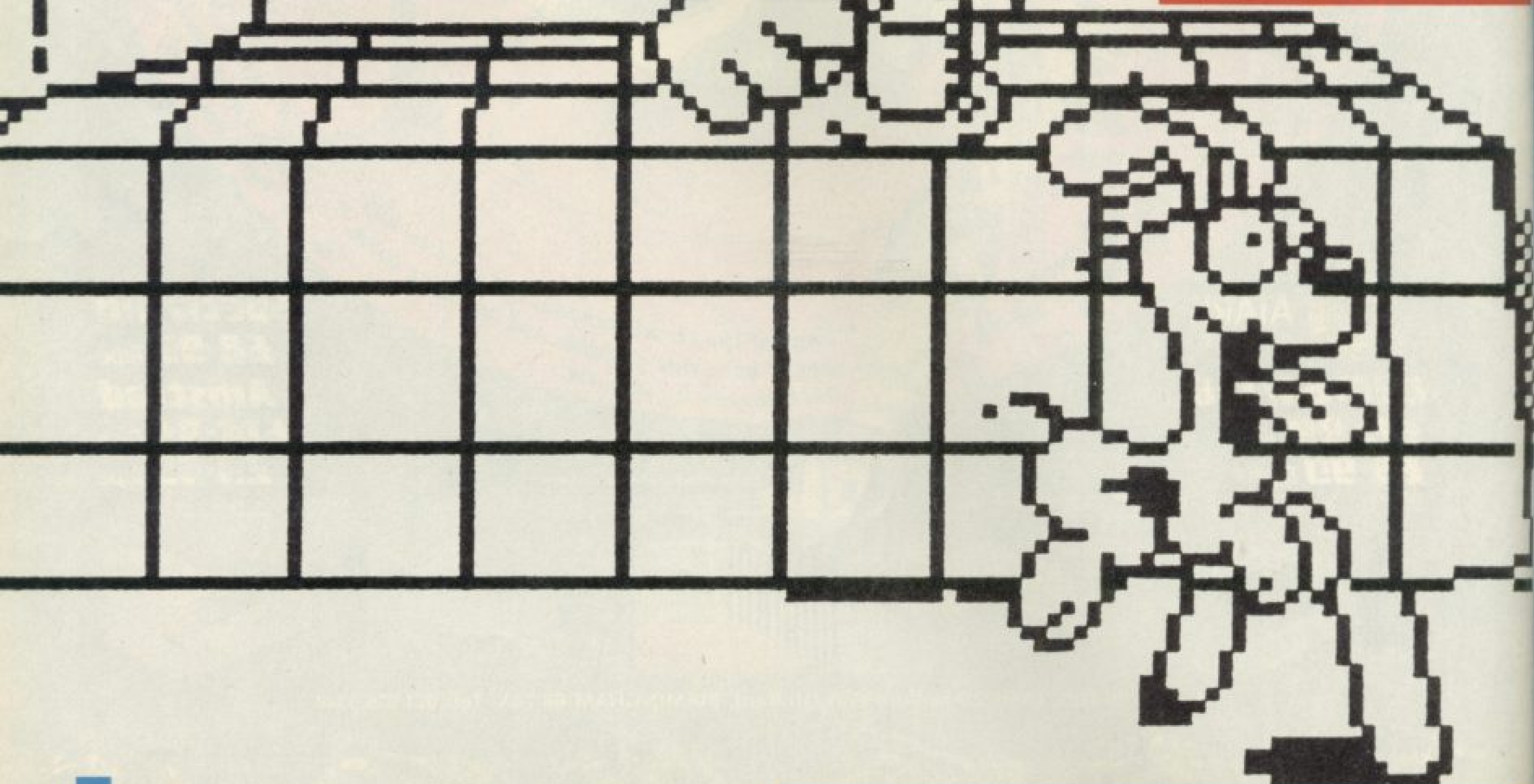
Sound effects are goodish, though the game doesn't really require much. I figured out a few things after the first couple of tries – it's important to remember Garfield is lazy – this may be the only game in the history of software where you sometimes have to deliberately





PROGRAMMERS

Known to the people at The Edge as the Caped Programmer, **Steve Cargill** (aged 21 years and addicted to pizza) was the person who put life into **Garfield.**
SOFTOGRAPHY: **Fighting Warrior** (*Melbourne House*, 1985), **Sir Lancelot** (*Melbourne House*, 1985). Began working as an In-House programmer at The Edge, and was responsible for the conversions of **Shadow Skimmer** and **Shaolin's Road**



ARCADE REVIEW

rest a bit. There are a number of areas including a street scene you'll discover when you first load it up but it's quite possible to get completely bewildered and feel as though it's not possible to get any further into the game – there is always another exit though you just need to find the right object . . .

It looks brilliant, it's funny, it contains scenes of gratuitous violence against stupid looking dogs, it's a challenge. It's something like a Classic don't you think? Yep, so do I■





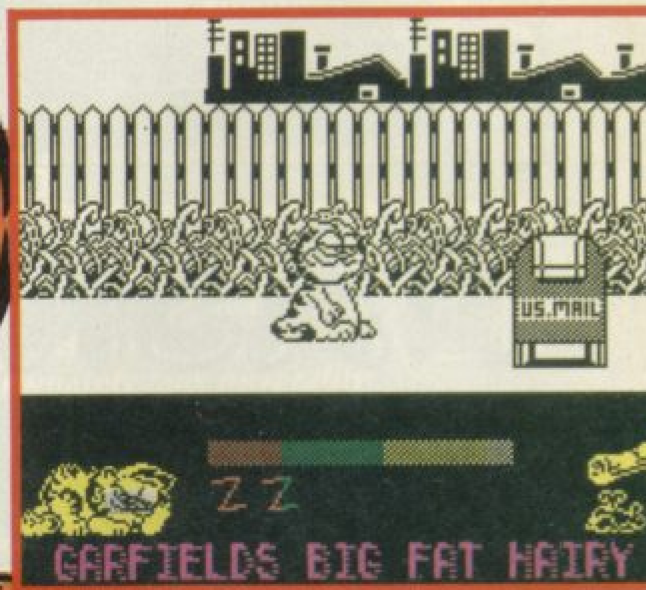
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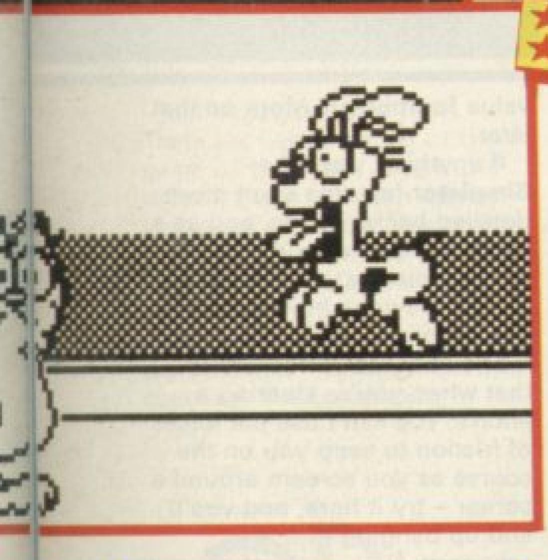
Easily the best cartoon licence ever. Garfield looks, acts and plays right. Better than anyone could have imagined

GARFIELD
Label: The Edge
Author: Steve
Price: £8.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Graham Taylor

★★★★★★★★★★ 10





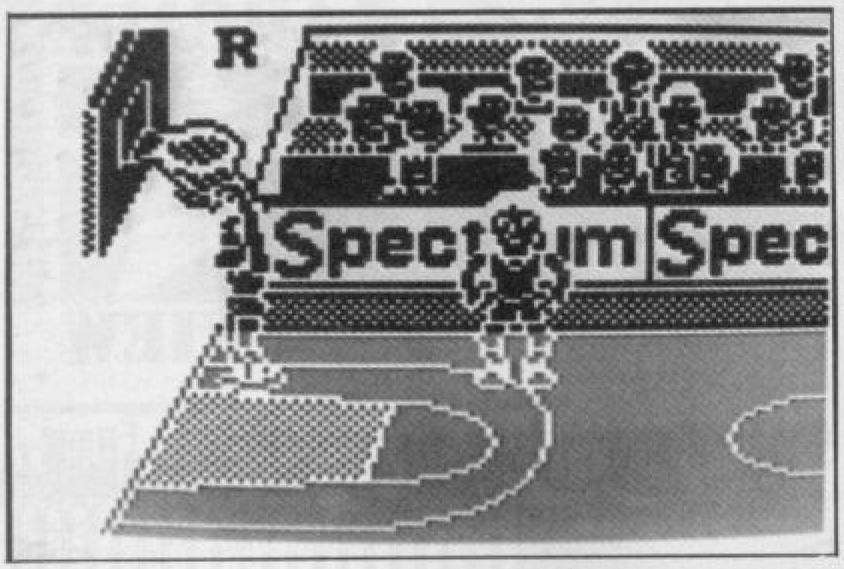




HINTS AND TIPS

- To see where you are going in the dungeons, take the lamp from the TV set.
- When tired, climb up somewhere high and sit down. When Oddie jumps up to you, jump over him, then when he comes back, kick him.
- Kick or jump on the chests to open – you may find something useful.
- If Oddie has something you want, kick him.





BASKET MASTER

I know I'm in a minority of one, but I normally hate sports simulations. If they're not realistic, they're a waste of time and even if they are realistic, why don't you get out and play the real thing instead?

Basket Master may yet have converted me, though. Nothing to do with wickerwork (or being a loony) it's a product of Spanish maestros Dinamic, and so features a guest celebrity one Fernando Martin, who is apparently something big down Madrid way. Rather than try to create a full team game, the programmers have sensibly opted for a one-on-one format which makes it possible to concentrate much more on the animation and computer player intelligence.

The cartoon-style graphics show you and your opponent, human or computer, facing off across the court (field? pitch?) The crowd jiggles with excitement . . . the ball bounces centre court . . . the match is on!

The players jog convincingly towards the ball, and from then on it's a case of jostling for possesion without performing any fouls. If you capture the ball by pressing the *Fire* button when the proximity indicator shows that you are within range, your next task is to prevent your opponent from tackling. to do this, you must turn your back to him while you run, by selecting a direction control then pressing the function button. He can't try to tackle you from behind without risking pushing you, and conceding two free shots at the basket.

If you get near enough to the basket to risk a shot, one press of the *Fire* button makes you leap in the air, and a second makes the shot. If you hit the rim, the ball will bounce back into play and you must watch its shadow, time your leap and fight for possession again. If you score a basket, the crowd goes wild, and you see a brilliant close-up slow-motion replay of your glorious victory.

One clever part is the way the computer chooses which kind of shot you make. For instance, if you are standing right under the basket, you'll make a slam-dunk (ramming the ball straight down through the hoop). You can also perform back-twists, sky-hooks and straight shots, all of which look great in the action replays.

Since I don't know any basketball jokes to end on, let's just say that **Basket Master** is refreshingly different and playable, and you should get down to the shops and slam one in your basket at once. (You're right – you don't know any basketball jokes – Ed)■

FACTS BOX

One of the more enjoyable recent sports simulations, combining neat graphics with skilful gameplay

BASKET MASTER
Label: Imagine
Author: Dinamic
Price: £7.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

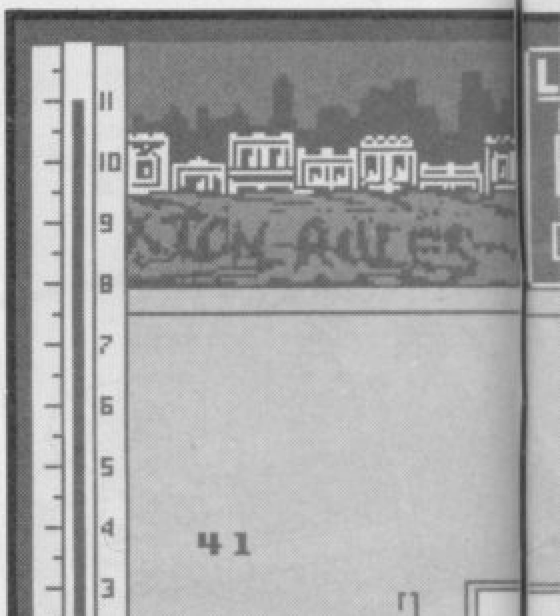
Reviewer: Tamara Howard

★★★★★★★★★☆ 9

SPORTS

Latest in a long line of joystick wagglers which started with games such as **Daley Thompson's Decathlon** and **Hyper Sports, Sports Hero** tries to recreate some of the more popular events in the Summer Olympics. The four events included in yer two quid's worth are, in order of appearance: 100 metre sprint. Simple to do, just waggle your joystick from side to side to complete the race as fast as possible. Long jump. Once again waggle your joystick to build up speed and when the pit comes into view, hold down the *Fire* key until you reach the angle of take-off you want. 110 metre hurdles. Once again, waggle that stick to complete the event as quick as you can, plus press *Fire* at the right moment to clear the hurdles. Pole vault. Pump that peripheral to increase velocity and press *Fire* to plant the pole and release the same to let go.

Graphically, no stops have been pulled. Everything is small and monochromatic, but even so, these are still some of the best I've seen in this genre. The graphics and behaviour of the on-screen character is amazingly realistic and the backdrops are superb. Ranging through three different skill levels, there is a ghetto street, a



Racing cars. BMX bikes. Go-karts. Skateboards. What is there left to write a circuit-racing game around?

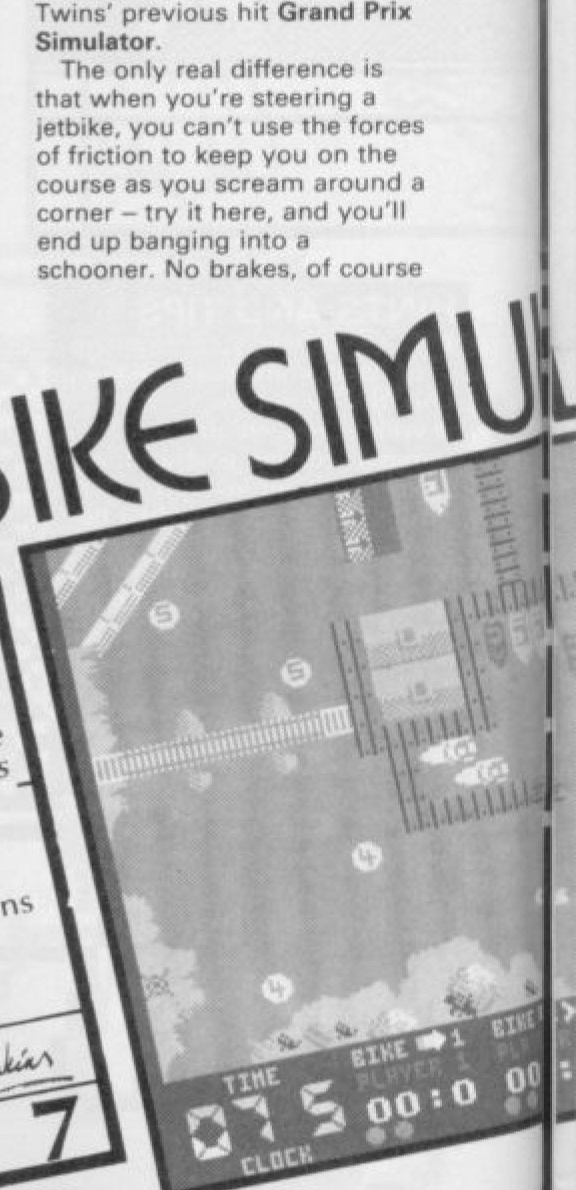
Just transfer the same scenario to the water, and the solution's obvious. Yachts. Sppedboats. Rowing boats. Pedalos. Oh, I know – those zippy how-long-can-you-manage-to-stay-on jet bikes. Bash out the backgrounds, change the speech samples and there you are.

JBS comes as the first offering on the new Codesmasters + label and we know what '+' means don't we? More money. **JBS** costs £4.99. There are 24 courses spread across two tapes. Perceived value for money? More on that later.

If anything, **Jet Bike Simulator** features even more detailed backgrounds, and as a result even tinier and less detailed sprites, than the Oliver Twins' previous hit **Grand Prix Simulator.**

The only real difference is that when you're steering a jetbike, you can't use the forces of friction to keep you on the course as you scream around a corner – try it here, and you'll end up banging into a schooner. No brakes, of course

JET BIKE SIMU



FACTS BOX

Difficult to decide whether this self-derivative game deserves a look at this price point. A lot of it, but it's a new 'budget' price

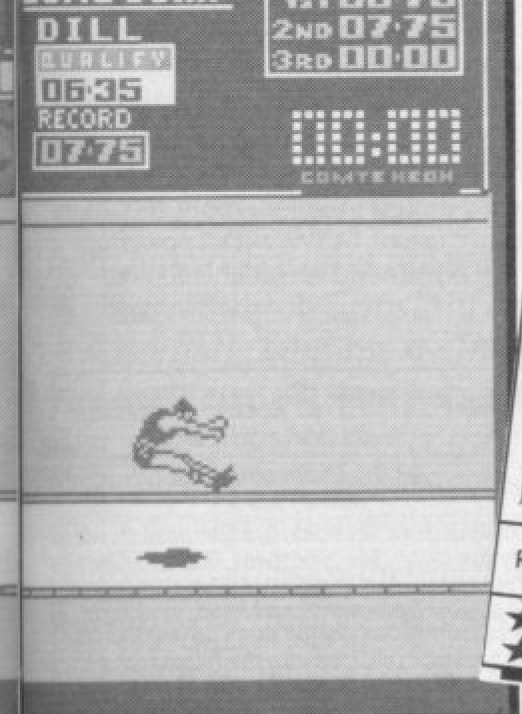
JET BIKE SIMULATOR
Label: Codemasters
Author: The Oliver Twins
Price: £4.99
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Chris Jenkins

★★★★☆★★★☆☆ 7

5 HERO

college (or maybe a university) and finally the Olympics. And all are highly playable■



ARCADE ★ REVIEW

FACTS BOX

An excellent sports sim package with its aim set on realism

SPORTS HERO
Label: Firebird
Author: in-house
Price: £1.99
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Chris Jenkins

★★★★☆ ★★★☆☆ 7

– just thrust, left and right. There are two versions of the game on the tapes. The more difficult Expert version allows you to see all the courses before you play. On the easier version, each one comes as an unpleasant surprise.

There are three groups of eight courses – docks, lakes and coastline. The complexity of the courses, the number of obstacles and the tightness of the turns obviously increase as you move on.

On each course, the aim is to compete it within a set time limit, racing against two drone bikes and one which is controlled by another player, or the computer. Each course features several sets of buoys (unfair to gurls) which you have to steer between in the correct order. As you zoom along, a trail of bubbles spreads behind you. If you get stuck behind all three opponents you'll practically lose sight of your bike.

At the end of each level there's a score table which gives your lap time, thos of your competitors, and your position.

The sound effects are of the plip-plip-plip variety, and the collision detection is a bit dodgy. Try to shave past a buoy, and you'll more than likely bounce off some invisible underwater obstruction.

Jet Bike Simulator comes in a two-cassette pack with a poster and a sticker at £4.99. It's a new price level for the software industry, and it will be interesting to see whether Codemasters can establish it.

Is **Jet Bike Simulator** worth the money? Well, it's basically a "remix" of the ideas conatined in **Grand Prix Simulator.** If you're the type who buys extended, remixed, dub disco dance versions of chart records, then you might be the type who'll buy **Jet Bike.** I'm a great remix merchant myself, but then I'm stupid■

LATOR



TWILIGHT

FOUR SMASH HITS

COMPILATION Label: **Hewson** Price: **£9.95** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **various** Reviewer: **Tony Dillon**

Four superb games for the price of one. Go get it

It's been a good year for Hewson all round, really. It's released some real full price gems on all formats and now, thanks to Mastertronic, it can bring out some budget gems, so what better way to end '87 than with a compilation. But this is no ordinary compilation, oh no. This is a little special. Yes, because believe it or not, every game on this tape got a Classic or a Smash or whatever at one time or another. But enough about how good they are, what do you get? Well you get Exolon, **controlling little Vitorc across 125 screens of full colour fun (a personal favourite of the Mad Celt).** Zynaps, **nasty blasty and dodgy-scrolly over 12 sheets.** Ranarama, **what more could I want. Dungeons, Dragons, spells and frogs, and finally** Uridium Plus, **destroying more super dreadnaughts. That's it, that's what you get for your Big Ben. I think you'll agree, it's really worth it■**

★★★★★ ★★★★☆ 9

XEN

ARCADE Label: **Top Ten** Author: **In-house** Price: **£1.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **various** Reviewer: **Tony Dillon**

Boldly tries to go where only Lightforce has been before and unfortunately fails miserably

Approach any computer games addict and ask him or her 'What is the most popular type of game?' and he will say 'Arcade'. Baffle that person even more by inquiring 'What is the most popular type of arcade game?' and you'll more than likely get the reply 'Vertical scrollers'. So, a signed photograph of Jonny 'Babyface' Riglar to the first SU reader who can shout out what kind of game Xen is. That's right, it's a vertically scrolling shoot-'em-up. You fly your ship upwards over an alien base, shooting, a lá Xevious, whilst dodging the enemy flak and bombing the bases. Gripping stuff. I had a great stuggle gripping my stomach to make sure it stayed under control. The scrolling in Xen is really awful and the main sprite and all the other little bits in the game are jerky and badly animated, though the colour is done quite well. Still, not well enough to make it decent■

★★☆☆☆ ★★☆☆☆ 4

SPORT PLUS THREE

COMPILATION Label: **Mastertronic** Author: **various** Price: **£9.99 (disc only)** Memory: **128K (+3 only)** Joystick: **various** Reviewer: **Tony Dillon**

Good value considering the number of games on the disc, but who left out the quality?

On this, one of the first 128K+3 budget compilations, you get three games previously released on various Mastertronic labels on one disc for under a tenner. Good value, eh? But what's on the unfloppy? Well, to kick off, you get Bump Set Spike. **I didn't like this very much. The graphics are small, sound is a little sparse and the computer is a smidgeon easy to beat. Next, you get** Strike. **This I didn't think was all that hot at all. It's probably the most unplayable bowling game I've seen and the animation could be a little better. Finally, you get** Speed King II. **The low point of the disc. I don't remember, and correct me if I'm wrong, but I can't recall** Speed King I **ever being released on the Spectrum. Still, the sequel's not that good, the tracks are boring and the only speed is this funny little green line that travels down the middle of the road which goes at the same speed when you are going at 60 and when you are at maximum speed. All round, the idea is sound, the pricing good, but can we have some slightly better games next time?■**

★★★☆☆ ★★☆☆☆ 5

SAS OPERATION THUNDERFLASH

ARCADE Label: **Top Ten** Price: **£2.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **Kempston** Reviewer: **Tony Dillon**

Overpriced budget trash. Let it lie

I won't bother with the humorous opening, in SAS Operation Thunderflash **you are a leader of an SAS squad and you have to rescue some ever so nice hostages, destroy all the ever so nasty baddies and get out before an ever so loud bomb goes boom. The game is viewed in 3D isometric filmation kind of fashion and as with all games of this sort is under rotational control. Or is it directional, the game I had didn't seem to be able to make up its mind. The graphics are ugly and jerky, the gameplay is slow and the idea has worn thin. I couldn't find anything decent about it, even the price tag put me off■**

★☆☆☆☆ ☆☆☆☆☆ 1

ZONE

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TASWORD 128 has been specifically developed to take full advantage of the memory offered by the Spectrum 128. A massive 60,000 characters can be held in memory at any one time, enough room for over 10,000 words! Incorporating a range of powerful commands and a mail merge facility (when transferred to microdrive). TASWORD 128 takes full advantage of the ZX Spectrum 128. TASWORD 128 is supplied on, and will run on, cassette and can easily be transferred to microdrive following instructions supplied with the program.

TASWORD PLUS TWO
THE WORD PROCESSOR

for the ZX Spectrum +2
cassette **£13.90**

Designed to cater for the ZX Spectrum +2 keyboard layout and legends, TASWORD PLUS TWO is packed with useful features — 64K text files, help displays, on-screen formatting and a sophisticated set of print options TASWORD PLUS TWO is readily transferred to microdrive although mail merge can even be done from cassette.



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TASPRINT
THE STYLE WRITER

TASPRINT for the ZX 48K Spectrum
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DATA-RUN -
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clean and pleasing to read

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a serious business-like script

PALACE SCRIPT -
a distinctive flowing font

TASMAN PRINTER INTERFACE

for the ZX Spectrum **£29.90**

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TAS-SIGN

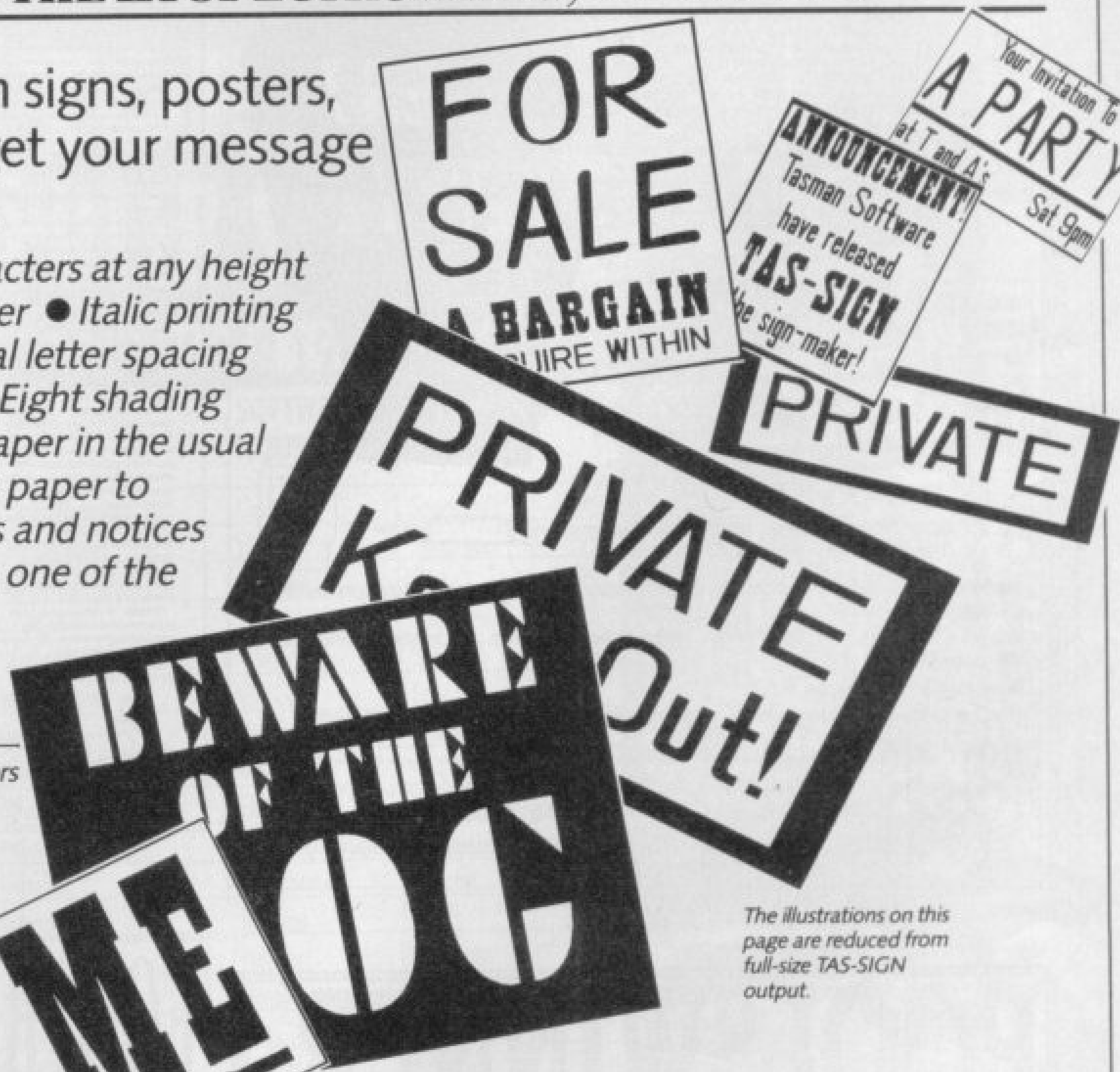
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- *Line centering*
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- *A range of options to select print quality*

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Canon	*Newbury*	
Citizen	*Panasonic*	

The illustrations on this page are reduced from full-size TAS-SIGN output.

TAS-SIGN

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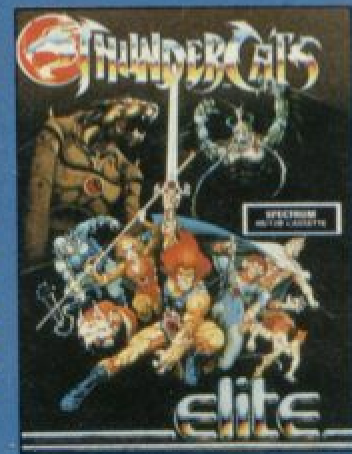
SPECTRUM SEGA COMMODORE SEGA



WOOLWORTHS

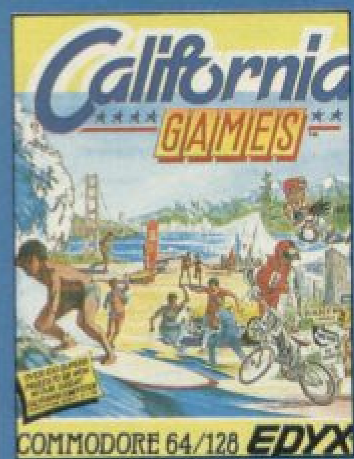
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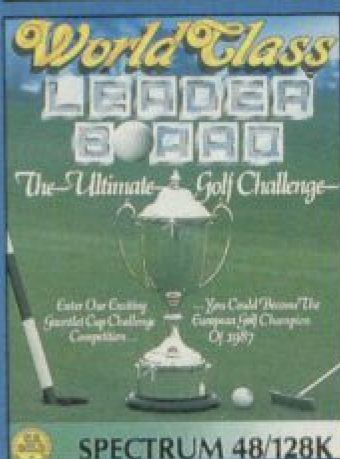
COMPUTER SOFTWARE



DECEMBER 1987

POSITION	TITLE	SOFTWARE HOUSE	MACHINE TYPE	PRICE
1.	Combat School	Ocean	Spectrum	7.95
2.	Thundercats	Elite	Spectrum	7.95
3.	California Games	U.S. Golc	C64	9.99
4.	6 Pack II	Elite	Spectrum	9.95
5.	World Class Leaderboard	U.S. Gold	Spectrum	8.99
6.	Indiana Jones	U.S. Gold	Spectrum	8.99
7.	Renegade	Imagine	Spectrum	7.95
8.	World Class Leaderboard	U.S. Gold	C64	9.99
9.	6 Pack II	Elite	C64	9.95
10.	Indiana Jones	U.S. Gold	C64	9.99
11.	Gunship	Microprose	Spectrum	9.95
12.	Renegade	Imagine	C64	8.95
13.	Nebulus	Hewson	Spectrum	7.95
14.	Star Wars	Domark	Spectrum	9.95
15.	Thundercats	Elite	C64	9.95
16.	Match Day II	Ocean	Spectrum	7.95
17.	Star Wars	Domark	C64	9.95
18.	Airbourne Ranger	Mircoprose	C64	14.95
19.	Computer Hits 4	Beaujolly	Spectrum	9.95
20.	Thundercats	Elite	Amstrad	8.95
21.	Live Ammo	Ocean	Spectrum	9.95
22.	Action Force	Virgin	Spectrum	9.95
23.	720'	U.S. Gold	Spectrum	9.99
24.	Bubble Bobble	Firebird	Spectrum	7.95
25.	Buggy Boy	Elite	C64	9.95
26.	Computer Hits 4	Beaujolly	C64	9.95
27.	Zig Zag	Mirrorsoft	C64	9.95
28.	Bubble Bobble	Firebird	C64	8.95
29.	Ace II	Cascade	Spectrum	8.95
30.	Action Force	Virgin	C64	9.95





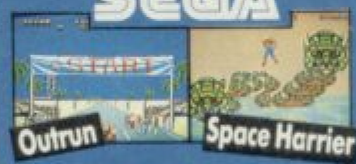




SEGA

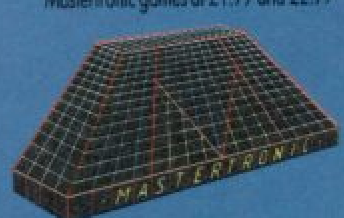


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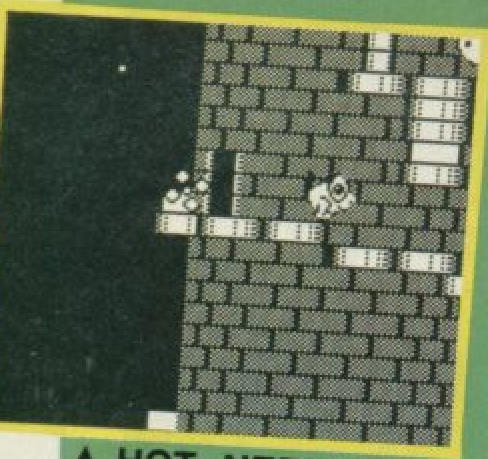
SPECTRUM SEGA COMMODORE SEGA SPECTRUM

COMMODORE SPECTRUM SEGA

FULL PRICE 20

HOT
FULL PRICE

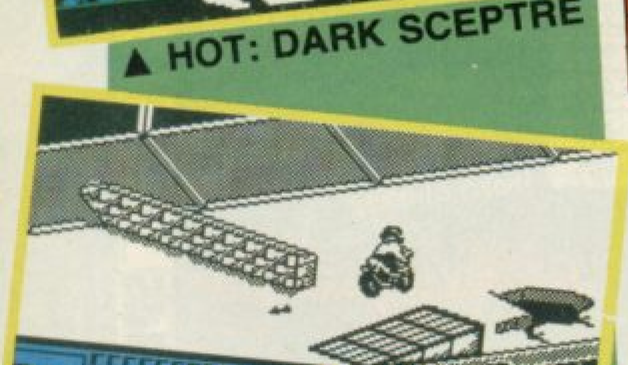
Look out this month for two games that we thought were sooo good that they gained prestigious Classics. Nebulus from Hewson is all about a littly frog-thingy and a tower, but despite that, it's completely brilliant. Check out Dark Sceptre too, it was a long time coming, but worth the wait. Keep your eyes out too, for Mean Streak in at 96,



▲ HOT: NEBULUS



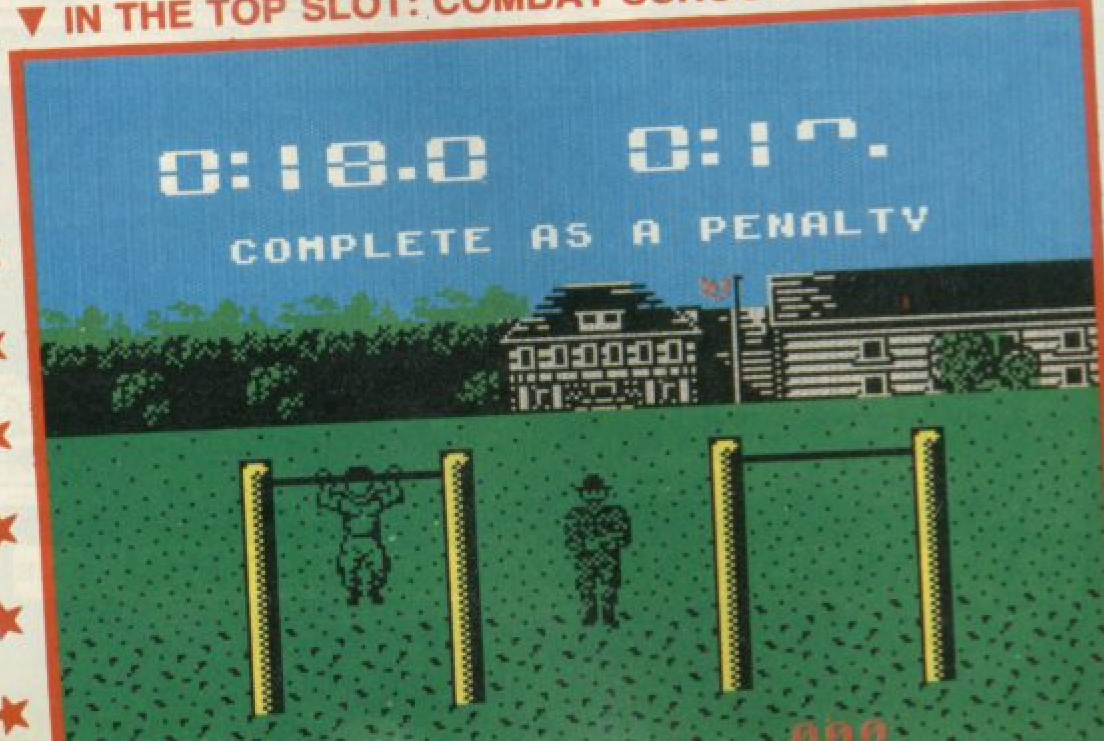
▲ HOT: DARK SCEPTRE



▲ HOT: MEAN STREAK

Pos	Last	Title	Comment	Publisher	Price	Rating
1	NEW	COMBAT SCHOOL	Can Ocean do no wrong? Another corker	OCEAN	£7.95	9 STARS
2	NEW	SOLID GOLD	Good value package of '87	US GOLD	£9.99	8 STARS
3	(3)	GAME, SET AND MATCH	Over 20 sports sims including most of the famous titles. Expensive though	OCEAN	£12.95	8 STARS
4	NEW!	GARY LINEKER'S SOCCER	Reasonable, though unremarkable strategy sim	GREMLIN	£7.99	6 STARS
5	NEW	THUNDERCATS	Marvellous graphics, brill sound, and fiendish gameplay (CLASSIC)	ELITE	£9.95	10 STARS
6	(15)	GUNSHIP	Highly impressive combat simulation. Enough action for non-simulation fans	MICROPROSE	£9.95	9 STARS
7	(1)	RENEGADE	Violent, beautifully animate conversion from the street-gang wars coin-op	OCEAN	£8.95	8 STARS
8	NEW!	LIVE AMMO	Well thought out collection of classic games	IMAGINE	£9.95	9 STARS
9	NEW!	STAR WARS	Super conversion of the coin-op	DOMARK	£9.95	8 STARS
10	NEW!	10 PAK	Wonderful. Monty, Krakout, Avenger and many more	GREMLIN	£9.99	9 STARS
11	(7)	WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD	Just as good as the original	ACCESS	£8.99	8 STARS
12	(2)	INDIANA JONES	Excellent conversion. Some quibbles but basically highly recommended	US GOLD	£8.99	9 STARS
13	NEW!	720°	US Gold's finest. Don't miss this one (CLASSIC)	US GOLD	£7.95	10 STARS
14	NEW!	COMPUTER HITS 10 VOL 4	An excellent compilation. Fab (CLASSIC)	BEAU JOLLY	£9.99	10 STARS
15	(12)	SIX PAK 2	Top value mixture of oldies and one new – varies from good to bad	ELITE	£9.95	9 STARS
16	(6)	BUBBLE BOBBLE	Nauseatingly cute conversion, but it's horribly addictive	FIREBIRD	£7.95	8 STARS
17	NEW!	TRANTOR	Fireshooting fun, some of the best graphics seen on the Spectrum (CLASSIC)	GO!	£8.99	10 STARS
18	(10)	ROAD RUNNER	Straightforward chase game let down by small graphics	US GOLD	£9.95	7 STARS
19	(9)	PAPERBOY	Excellent conversion from the coin-op hit. Great (CLASSIC)	ELITE	£7.95	10 STARS
20	(8)	COCONUT CAPERS	Bound to be well received by Jack fans. Polished and action-packed	GREMLIN	£7.99	7 STARS

▼ IN THE TOP SLOT: COMBAT SCHOOL



SU CHARTS

COMPILED BY GALLUP FOR SINCLAIR USER

ARCADE

1	COMBAT SCHOOL	OCEAN
2	JOE BLADE	PLAYERS
3	DIZZY	CODE MASTERS
4	THUNDERCATS	ELITE
5	RENEGADE	IMAGINE

ADVENTURE

1	GHOST HUNTERS	CODE MASTERS
2	VAMPIRE	CODE MASTERS
3	PLAY IT AGAIN SAM	MASTERTRONIC
4	RIGEL'S REVENGE	MASTERTRONIC
5	DEAD OR ALIVE	ALTERNATIVE

SIMULATION

1	GRAND PRIX SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS
2	FRUIT MACHINE SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS
3	ATV SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS
4	PROFESSIONAL SKI SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS
5	GUNSHIP	MICROPROSE

BUDGET 10

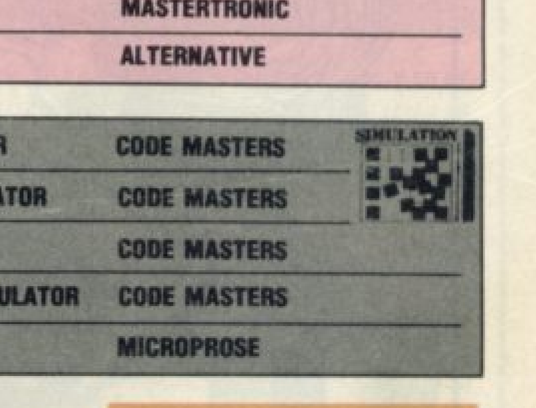
1	(1)	**GRAND PRIX SIMULATOR** Superb follow-up to BMX Simulator. Reminiscent of Super Sprint	CODE MASTERS £1.99	8 STARS
2	(3)	**FRUIT MACHINE SIMULATOR** Surprisingly, the whole thing is idiotically addictive	CODE MASTERS £1.99	8 STARS
3	(1)	**ATV SIMULATOR** Cheap and friendly little simulator, not great but OK	CODE MASTERS £1.99	6 STARS
4	(2)	**JOE BLADE** A kind of scrolling arcade adventure with elements to please everybody	PLAYERS £1.99	8 STARS
5	(4)	**PRO SKI SIMULATOR** An old idea played in a new way. Definitely masterly code	CODE MASTERS £1.99	8 STARS
6	(8)	**DIZZY** Once you get cracking, you'll never let it lay for a minute	CODE MASTERS £1.99	9 STARS
7	NEW!	**SOCCER BOSS** Really awful rival for Football Manager. Don't even think about it	ALTERNATIVE £1.99	1 STARS
8	(7)	**BACK TO THE FUTURE** Budget re-release, good for five or six minutes	FIREBIRD £1.99	4 STARS
9	(9)	**BMX SIMULATOR** It's a genuine simulation – a biker's paradise with smooth slippery action	CODE MASTERS £1.99	10 STARS
10	NEW!	**AGENT X II** Highly unoriginal and dull. Don't bother	MASTERTRONIC £1.99	3 STARS

▼ IN THE TOP SLOT: GRAND PRIX SIMULATOR

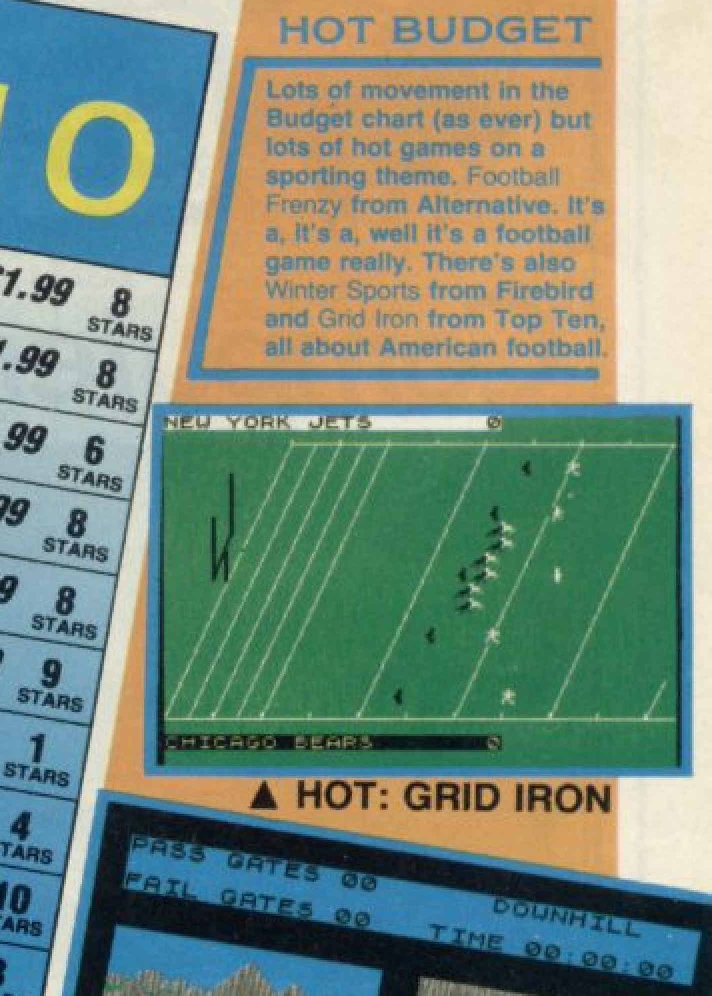


HOT BUDGET

Lots of movement in the Budget chart (as ever) but lots of hot games on a sporting theme. Football Frenzy from Alternative. It's a, it's a, well it's a football game really. There's also Winter Sports from Firebird and Grid Iron from Top Ten, all about American football.



▲ HOT: GRID IRON



▲ HOT: WINTER SPORTS

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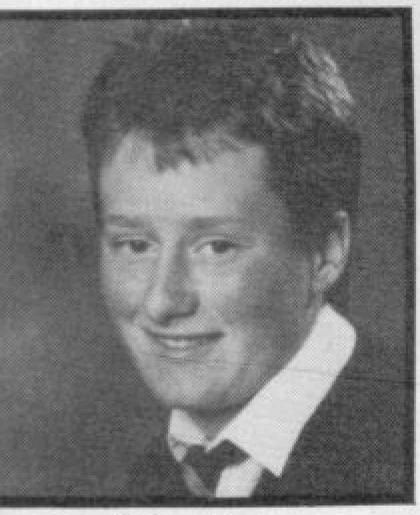
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And if you don't send us your picture – the sillier the better – we'll have to print a picture of a slug



Executor
Ace

SU got it right again. Xecutor is easily worth a Classic, it must be the best game of the year. The graphics, sound and armament options are great. It runs so smoothly it makes Lightforce and Zynaps appear basic. Xecutor is the Rolls Royce of the Spectrum space shoot-'em-ups, and the big baddie at the end of a level is a real-mean thing. Executor, I'll love you to death.

Jonathan Sturman
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
Game Choice: 720°

Wizball
Ocean

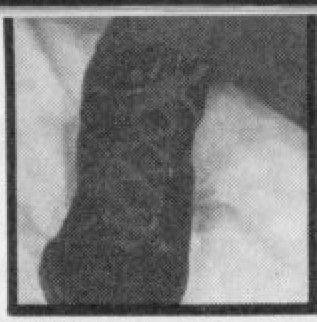
Having recently purchased a Spectrum +2, I decided to get a few decent games to play, so I picked up a copy of the mega mag (creep creep) and had a butcher's at the latest games . . . WOW! MEGA-WICKED!!

Wizball must be one of the greatest games ever made, it's just brilliant. Once you've got the hang of controlling your cute little green pea-like ball, you're away and the sky's the limit. Take it from me, Wiz-



ball can be infuriating at times, admittedly, but overall it's just amazing. Great graphics, excellent use of colour, all make Wizball an absolute joy to play. Buy it.

Raymond Benge
Eastbourne
East Sussex
Game Choice:
Renegade



720°
US Gold

You were absolutely right! 720° is the best game out. After playing it in the arcades, I rushed out to get the Spectrum version.

OK, so the graphics could have been better, the whole thing could have been a bit more colourful, but then again, you've got the old problem with the clashes. And the gameplay, well that's exactly the same as the source, it's just brilliant!

Go out and buy this game NOW!!

E J Shirley
Stroud
Gloucester
Game Choice:
California Games

Bubble Bobble
Firebird

Aaarrgggh!! Have you no brain in that head of yours? (Yes, I'm talking to you, Tamara Howard). You only gave Bubble Bobble eight stars!!! This deserves at least eight Classics!!!



What with its mega-cute characters and music, this must be the best arcade conversion ever!! So if you've got a spare eight quid lying about the place, get to your nearest Speccy shop and get Bubble Bobble, before it's too late!!

Richard Page
Camberley
Surrey
Game Choice:
Action Force

Wizball
Ocean

I totally agree with your review of Wizball. I liked the original idea of having to colour in the planet, and the graphics are awesome! The colour is ace, and the way Catelite follows you around collecting colour droplets, then you battle your way to the Wizlab. This is such a brilliant game.

Well done SU, the game deserved a Classic, and you gave it one. Keep up the good work.

Andrew Stanford
Alcester
Warwickshire
Game Choice: 720°



ATV Simulator
Code Masters

I was just about to buy BMX Simulator, when I spotted this little game. Was I disappointed by it? No way, never in a month of Sundays, this game is excellent! It's the best game I've ever bought, but why the 6 stars, this should have had, at the very least, 12 stars?

OK, so there are only 6 levels, but you can have so much fun, expecially with the two player option, overall, a must buy for anyone. If you liked BMX Simulator, you'll love this.

Stuart Conliffe
Burtonwood
Warrington
Game Choice:
California Games



Athena
Imagine

Gordon Bennett! This is one lady I wouldn't like to meet in a dark alley on Halloween! Athena is one tough lady. One thing before I go on – how come she's wearing a bikini? I mean, it isn't a fitting garment if you're duffing the hell out of huge great ghouls and monsters. Even the monsters aren't fittingly dressed either! Kitchen foil



armour and JOCK STRAPS!!!

Apart from the fashion flaws, it's a pretty nifty game, faithful to the arcade version. The graphics are rather good too, apart from the monochrome. (Grr). The sound's neat and there's a good variety of music.

Well done Imagine.

P Simmonds
High Wycombe
Bucks
Game Choice: Rampage



ATV Simulator
Code Masters

6 stars! 6 stars!! What are you thinking of? (On second thoughts, don't answer that).

ATV Simulator is the most brill, ace and skill game in the Universe! Just because Gary Rook couldn't play the game, he gave it a measley 6 stars, and I think it should have got at least 11 stars. As for this Rook person, I think you should force feed him with a subscription to, dare I say it, Y**r S******r.

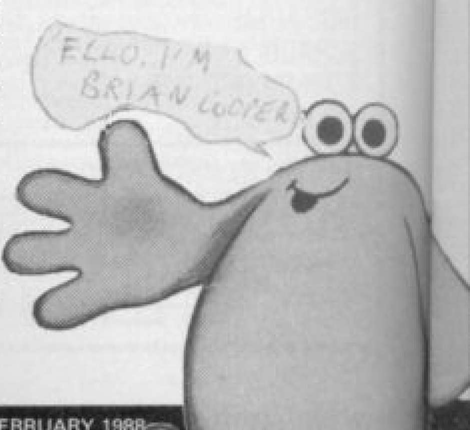
Steven Templeman
Garforth
Leeds
Game Choice:
Mean Streak

Exolon
Hewson

Not wishing to be controversial or anything, but I hate Exolon. Ten stars is far too high a rating. Two is more like it! Exolon is pathetic.

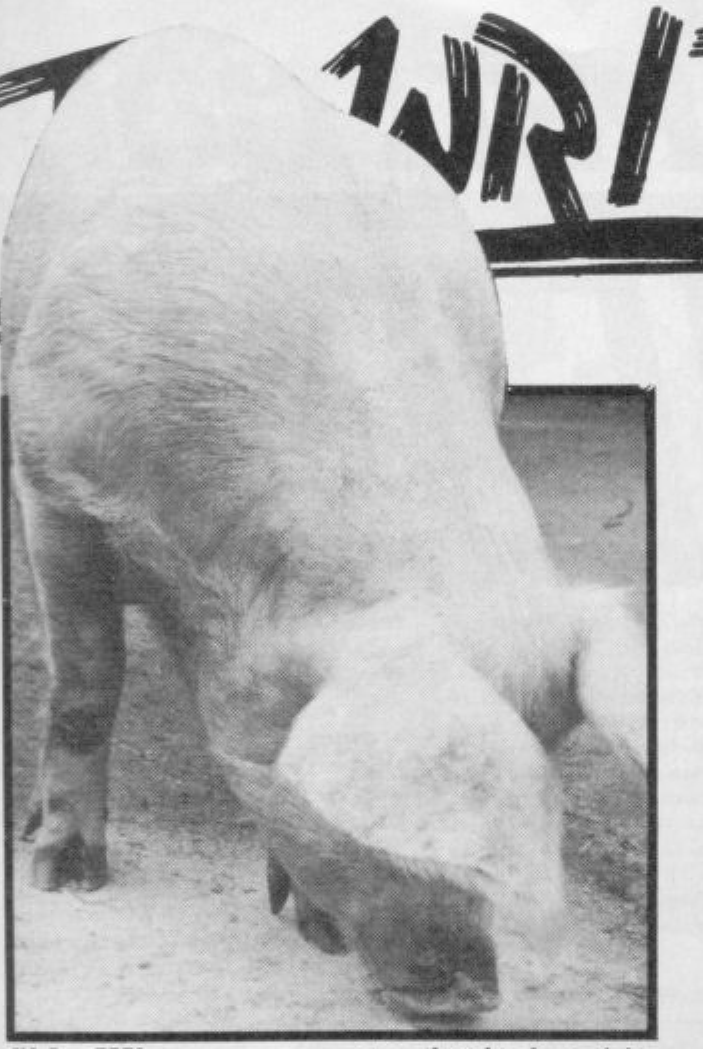
HA! Bet I had Andrew Hewson a bit worried there! I was only kidding, so please don't send round your heavy mob Andrew. Will you spare me if I say that the game is absolutely MEGASQUIGGLEDOODLY-BRILL with amazing graphics, sound, colour, gameplay and anything else you care to mention? And great and noble Sir Hewson, if you persude SU to give me a tenner for this review it will soon be in your coffers as you can see from my game choice below!

Brian Cooper
Cumbernauld
Scotland
Game Choice:
Nebulus





WRITE STUFF?!



Side Wize
Firebird

So Side Wize is worth a Classic eh? A match for Exolon is it? No way!

OK, so the graphics are quite good, and some of the big nasties are great, but the attack waves get repetitive and monotonous, and after a few games the game itself gets pretty boring. You should have given games like Cobra, Enduro Racer, Barbarian and Renegade Classics before you even thought about giving Side Wize one.

As for Side Wize being a match for Exolon, there's no comparison, Exolon is totally mega-brilliant – at least you got that right!

Side Wize is worth 3 stars maybe, but certainly not a Classic.

David Rosie
Caithness
Scotland
Game Choice:
Micronaut One



Side Wize
Firebird

Whoop! Whoop! Whoop! I've totally flipped! What a game! Side Wize is absolutely, megafantastically brill, nice one giving it a Classic.

After reading your review, I burned rubber down to John Menzies, snaffled a copy of Side Wize, zoomed home, loaded it in to my Speccy and was instantly on Cloud 9. OK, so it's not got a really hot title screen, but during the game, sound (on menu screen) and graphics make up the difference. At least a game that's possibly even better than Hewson's Exolon. (Well maybe just a bit better).

Allan Martin
Fife
Scotland
Game Choice:
Barbarian

Ballbreaker
CRL

Nine stars? Ballbreaker is totally pathetic! The gameplay is mind-numbingly slow, the use of monochrome is confusing and the sound is virtually non-existent. Graham Taylor, your so-called reviewer, should be sacked immediately. The round blob (the ball) jerks annoyingly when the kangaroos and whizzing spikes appear, make the gameplay even harder. Even without the spikes and kangaroos, the ball is impossible to hit. On the whole the game is total trash.

Don't buy it!!

Jim Naylor
Kidderminster
Worcestershire
Game Choice:
Freddy Hardest



War Cars
Firebird

Had Jim Douglas been on the meths when he reviewed War Cars we ask ourselves? Why give it 5 stars? Why give it 1 star? Why review it even? Why not just throw it out of the window?

In other words folks, War Cars is just total rubbish. I mean racing around a screen to get to the flag before the other car, and then turning round and chasing it! How boring. And the Construction Set, that's harder to do than getting Mary Whitehouse to do a striptease.

So come on Firebird, if it wasn't for Bubble Bobble I'd have had to have blown you up by now. (Only joking). Pull yourselves together.

M J Norris
Letchworth
Herts
Game Choice:
Exolon



Flunky
Piranha

After playing Flunky at the PCW Show, I thought to myself, what a brilliant game, I must buy this at all costs.

But what a pity I had not boethered to read your review. The other day I went down to my local computer store and handed over my tenner, about two hours later I was swearing at it. It's the most tedious and useless game I have ever played and to add to that, it costs £9.95 – a complete rip-off.



6 stars! – I wouldn't even give it ½ a star. Do not buy this game at any cost, or you'll be thinking of committing suicide like I was.

Get the message?

Thomas Dalton
Royston
Herts
Game Choice: 720°



Super Sprint
Electric Dreams

Broom Broom – Super Sprint is such a great coin-op conversion. So why oh why was it only given seven stars? 'Over-priced and not visually stunning' – Huh!! Definitely worth every penny and almost identical graphics to those of the excellent coin-op. Fast and incredibly addictive. It fully deserves a ten star award, and a Classic. It easily beats the socks off the very sub-standard Grand Prix Simulator.

Still, I suppose I'll forgive you this time.

Ian Meggridge
Llandaff North
Cardiff
Game Choice:
Leaderboard

Renegade
Imagine

Your review of Renegade was great, but couldn't you have squeezed in another two stars to make it a Classic? The graphics are so well drawn, and each level is well detailed, even down to the graffiti on the train in Level One. The animation of the characters as they swipe their clubs is brill. This is no ordinary beat-'em-up, unlike karate games, you really get the feeling of being there, about to face a gang of thugs. This is definitely a top class game, so go geddit now.

Paul McCartan
County Down
Northern Ireland
Game Choice:
Trantor – The Last Stormtrooper



Every so often — well very often actually — you write to tell us that we know nothing about anything and insist that some program we trashed is actually the best game ever. Conversely you blast us for saying something is great that you absolutely loath and detest.

Enough is enough. We can't take any more, if you think you're so clever you write the damn magazine. We mean it!

Every month we'll devote a page to a selection of your opinions on the latest software. Don't get mad – write the review you think the game should have received and we (subject only to space) will print it.

Now, aside from seeing your work in print we will send you a crisp £10—er, cheque — with which to buy the software title of your choice — tell us what you plan to spend the money on if your review is printed.

One request, we want to know what you look like so send us a picture. Any old picture will do — you at home, in Ibiza, in the garden, even making silly faces in photobooths we don't care.

So get cracking — write your reviews and send them together with the completed coupon below.

YOUR REVIEWS
Maximum 150 words. No swearing, libel or illegibility and come out of the corner Don't beat around the bush – tell us straight what you think. Send your review (or any *recent* game) plus your picture and fill in the coupon. *send the lot to The Write Stuff, Sinclair User, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

Name ....

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The program I would most like to buy with my tenner is ....

* **Reviews supplied without full name and address will not be considered for publication.**

COMPETITION WINNERS



SOFT & CUDDLY

Gather round my children, and listen to tales from the grave. Let Auntie SU make your eyes bulge, your hair stand on end, and all your teeth drop out.

Back in November we offered you an all expenses paid trip to The London Dungeon, and the lucky winner who's going to have all his bits stretched on the racks is Chris McGowan from Sutton in Hull. And seeing as how we're so generous and all, the following thirty people all get copies of Power House's game, Soft and Cuddly***:***

A Hulmes, Timperley, Cheshire. P Armstrong, Tooting, London. Paul Jenkins, Heath, Cardiff. Paul Cross, Hyde, Cheshire. John Smylie, Southsea, Hants. Nicholas Catchpole, Silverdale, Lancs. Philip Vaughan, Herefordshire. Steven Conway, Great Horwood, Nr Blackburn, Lancs. Jamie Wilson, Bristol. Alex Ng, Colwyn Bay, Clwyd. Jamie Mills, Luton, Beds. Dominic Franks, Saltburn, Cleveland. M R Major, Andover, Hants. Colin Taylor, Tavistock, Devon. J K Martson, Ferndown, Dorset. Duncan MacLeod, Isle of Harris, Scotland. Simon Slater, Ferryhill, Co Durham. Leon Glendinning, Newton Abbot, Devon. Simon Needham, Chalfont St Peter Bucks. Victoria Shipman, Skegness, Lincs. Stephen Rushton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs. Andrew Whittaker, Blackpool, Lancs. Henry Wellesley, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield. Richard Paterson, Ardentinny, Argyll. Paul Brittain, Eastoft, Scunthorpe. Imaad Shan, London SW19.

Not finished yet though! These next thirty all get Soft and Cuddly ***posters to hang on their walls to scare themselves with in the middle of the night:***

F Steel, Elm Park, Essex. David Hughes, Morriston, Swansea. J Gilbertson, Garforth, Leeds. Lee Horrey, Sawston, Cambs. P Atkins, Lochgilphead, Argyll. Justin Edwards, Exmouth, Devon. Chay Lawrence, Spalding, Lincs. Simon Howe, Woodbridge, Suffolk. S Clarke, Castle Bromwich, B'ham. Timo Partala, Tampere, Finland. Richard Holden, Ipswich, Suffolk. Edward W Quinn, Middlesbrough, Cleveland. Mark Gilroy, Woolston, Southampton. Darren Gourley, Glengormley, Co Antrim. N R Gunn, Edinburgh. Robert Taylor, Colchester, Essex. Oliver London-Webb, Dorset. Paul Leiper, Maybole, Ayrshire, Scotland. Simon Wood, Dundee, Scotland. A Thorpe, Seaham, Co Durham. John Kirkland, Norfolk Park, Sheffield. Oliver Golds, Richmond, North Yorkshire. Chaz Gray, Cambridge. T Grampin, Goxhill, South Humberside. Nicholas Young, Saddleworth, Lancs. Helen Williamson, Elgin, Moray. Alan Bunker, Wosley, Gt Manchester. C Evans, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton. Lloyd Wood, Werrington, Peterborough.

And in case you're interested, the answers go like this:

1 The number of the Beast is 666, not Didcot 764-4723 as a member of the SU staff suggested.

2 John George Jones wrote Soft and Cuddly

3 And the most horrible thing that anyone came up with — and it was Chris' idea — was the thought that one day Bonnie Langford might well get her own TV show! ■

720°

Whoo! Get on your skateboard! Skate around a bit! Fall off and hurt yourself quite a lot!

Skateboarding has made a comeback, and to celebrate, we ran a competition with US Gold and its splendiferous game 720°. Here now, for your delectation are the winners of the competition, and the answers, just in case you were stupid enough to get them wrong in the first place.

The Answers:

1 A skateboard has four wheels.

2 The wheels on a skateboard are called trucks.

3 Atari make the coin-op on which 720° is based.

The Winners:

Overall winner and person getting all the spoils:

Mark Webber, Blackburn, Lancs.

Ten second prize winners who get a skateboard and a copy of the game to play while it's raining are these people:

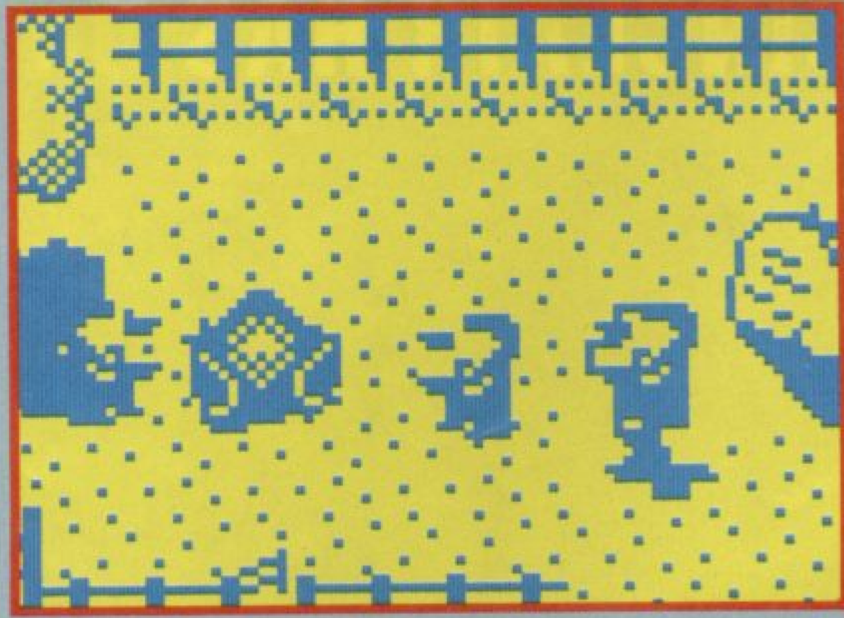
James Branson, Waterlooville, Portsmouth. Simon Clark, Peebleshire. Jay Food, Slough, Berks. Paul Dickens, Wellingborough, Northants. J Marshall, Davenham, Cheshire. Kris Fleming, Stocksbridge, Sheffield. James Davis, Northwood, Middlesex. Guy Pinder, Baylow, Derbys. Robert Macfarlane, Glasgow, Renfrewshire. Paul Vowden, Estover, Plymouth.

And thirty people right at the bottom of the slope get a copy of the game to do with whatever they please:

Tim Barber, Holyport, Berks. David Green, Stickland, Nr Blandford, Dorset. Matthew Ward, Olney, Bucks. Lee Tucknett, Newhaven. Matthew Handsard, Stevenage. Brett Lovett, Polegate, E Sussex. Richard Ebora, Brighton, E Sussex. Paul Champness, Bristol, Avon. Adrian Spear, Saltaire, W Yorks. David Smith, Leighton Buzzard, Beds. Paul Crabtree, Exeter, Devon. Alan McCrearty, Doune, Renfrewshire. Justin Roberts, Denbigh, Clwyd. Damian Leonard, Episkopi Primary School, BFPO 53. T Woolley, Charlbury, Oxon. N Davenport, Chelt, Glos. Justin Monkenett, Preston, West Sussex. S C Spindley, Scunthorpe, S Humberside. N MacDonald, Carluke, Scotland. Ian Peterson, York. Mark Tate, Drybrook, Gloucester. Daniel Clark, Brentwood, Essex. Ian Glyndwr Hocsom, West Pontnewydd, Gwent. Ben Richardson, Greenford, Middx. James Newman, Amersham, Bucks. Jonathan Littlefair, Middlesborough, Cleveland. David Punter, Seaham, Co Durham. Jason Rendell, Burgess Hill, West Sussex. Patrick Shoer, Ossett, W Yorkshire. Ian Sherritt, Preston, Lancs. ■



ARCADE REVIEW



FACTS BOX

Superior sequel. Good gameplay. Good graphics. Good heavens! Firebird is getting its act together

ENLIGHTENMENT
Label: Firebird
Author: Dene Carter/Brian Pollock
Price: £7.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Jim Douglas

★★★★★★★★★★ 10

I'm not even going to attempt to explain the storyline behind Firebird's **Druid** sequel, **Enlightenment**, because it's so hopeless. Lots of the: "he uttered two words of mystical Druid chant" type of tosh, in fact.

All you really need to know is

ENLIGHTENMENT

SINCLAIR USER CLASSIC





that you are up against your old mate Acamantor who's back in town after a hundred-year sulk from the last time you kicked him out. You've got to find the entrance to his dungeon, and get down there through all the bad guys.

I suppose I'd better explain what the **Druid** games are like. Superficially, they're a bit **Gauntlet** (Oh noooooo! – a nation protests) but the graphics are better defined and the gameplay is quite different.

Moving around is dead simple (in theory) – left, right and up and down. Like **Druid**, the **Enlightenment** screen is drawn in that rather irritating style of semi-plan view. Instead of being shown merely the top of the objects in the maze, you get to see the top and some of the side nearest to the bottom of the screen, if you know what I mean. This means that while it looks more appealing, it can be a right chore walking around, trying to work out whether you can squeeze between the fence and the tree.

The little devils in question come in a number of shapes and sizes. Acamantor seems to be able to control just about anything in the land of Belorn and use it for his evil purposes. Even innocent looking shrubs and trees will spring to life as you walk past and scuttle after you, waving their branches in a menacing manner. If you come into close proximity of any of the nasties, your energy will be drained. When it reaches zero – you're kaput.

You can defend yourself in two ways.

You can shoot a fairly weedy looking lightning bolt which will knock off the bad guys after a number of strikes which vary from one to about seven. Your electrical energy is obviously limited, so it's no use shooting off bolts all over the place and leaving yourself so weak that you can't defend yourself.

And, being a Druid, you can cast a number of spells once you've 'learned' them. There are about thirty spells, and while you can only remember eight at a time, if you select a sensible mixture of offensive, obstructive and medicinal magics, you can become quite a force to be reckoned with.

As well as the run-of-the-mill Death Touch and Invisibility spells, you can conjure up an elemental of varying specifications to guard you or run errands. Depending on what environmental conditions you find yourself facing, you'll have to choose an appropriate Elemental. There's no point bringing up a watery Elemental if it's boiling hot, as it'll just frazzle away.

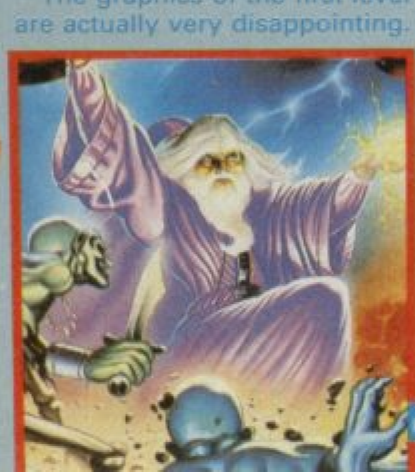
The graphics of the first level are actually very disappointing. The colours used are really quite bad – yellow and blue, and the whole affair looks quite low-rent. Later levels, however (there are ten above-ground and five dungeon levels) look great, and the style of graphics changes quite dramatically to give the impression of different landscapes. There are icy wastes, strange woodlands, deserts and the village of Ishmar, where you begin the game.

Gameplay-wise, **Enlightenment** is great. You move quickly and easily (with the exception of the tree problems mentioned earlier) and you have just enough time to juggle your spells and choose which to employ before the enemy catches up with you. It's possible to wander around for some time getting a feel of the game without actually having to solve many problems.

So what do we have then? Another **Gauntlet**? No. **Druid** was only really similar in theme. **Enligtenment** is a rather classy sequel to a fairly innovative game. A corker ■

PROGRAMMER

BRIAN POLLOCK has only been programming professionally for about a year. He started fiddling around with the early Sinclair machines at 11, and is completely self-taught. He programs on the AMS PCW8512 and then ports the code down to a Spectrum.
SOFTOGRAPHY: **Enlightenment** (Firebird, 1987)

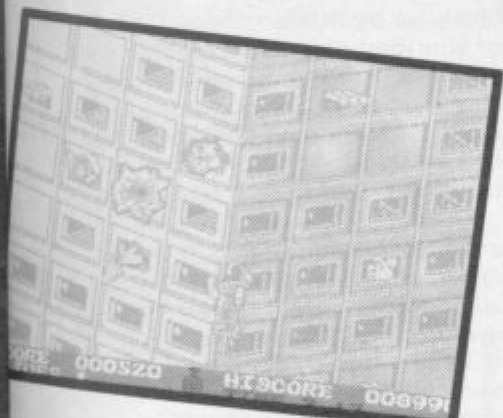


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FIRE TRAP

In **Firetrap,** you must rescue frantic screaming women and crying care bears from their destruction in the engulfing flames. I'd rather leave them there but that's the kind of guy I am.

Every so often a few computers or a bomb or two fall from above. When you are hit by either, you fall a few storeys before regaining your grip on the wall.

Strapped to your back is a trusty water cannon, to be used to extinguish the flames and to destroy the lumps of matter that fall. Controls are sluggish, and one irritating glitch is that you can't move and fire at the same time.

The game is not difficult, but can be highly frustrating as it has an annoying habit of killing you for no apparent reason. One of the turkeys in arcade conversions■

FACTS BOX

Graphically and aurally bland conversion of a little known arcade machine

FIRETRAP
Label: Electric Dreams
Author: Source
Price: £9.99
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Tony Dillon

★★☆☆☆
★☆☆☆☆ 3



ARCADE ★ REVIEW

PHANTOM CLUB

Groucho Marx used to say that he wouldn't join any club that would have him as a member. Normally I'd agree, but I would name an exception for the **Phantom Club**.

This elite brotherhood, you see, consists entirely of superheroes with amazing powers – so I'd feel right at home. Unfortunately, absolute power corrupts absolutely, and the overlord Zarg has turned to the ways of evil. Well, what did they expect with a name like Zarg?

As Plutus the Zelator, lowest ranked of the **Phantom Club,** your task is to defeat Zarg and other corrupted superheroes.

While you might find the isometric graphics style and the 550 chambers reminiscent of many an **Ultimate**-style arcade adventure, **Phantom Club** has enough original elements to make it stand out.

For a start, instead of the slow shuffle with which heroes of such games usually get around, Plutus jogs at a respectable pace, and on your pressing the space-bar he executes an impressive forward dive and roll. You'll need this to avoid low walls which block the entrances for some of the chambers, and the nasty spiders which try to bite your ankle.

Your main opponents, though, are the other superheroes, and this is where the game gets really interesting. Each enemy has different powers. PsiMan, for instance, generates a psychological barrier which prevents you from leaving his chamber until you destroy his flying spirit. To do this you spit energy beams from your helmet.

Some enemies are indestructible, and simply have to be avoided until a timer runs its course. Grabbing a floating sphere can win you an extra life, but touching it again depletes your energy. A floating diamond can award you extra speed, while shooting a rotating tube allows you to save the game.

In some rooms you find what looks like a movie screen. Shooting this brings up a text display giving you details of a special mission. However, you'll only be eligible for this mission if you have reached a certain score and rank. Your eventual aim is to reach the rank of Ipsissimus, at which point you can defeat Zarg.

Phantom Club looks very much like Imagine's hit **Movie,** not surprisingly since it's by the same programmer. In many ways it's more imaginative than **Movie,** with strange science-fictional backgrounds, weird armoured enemies and surprises like man-eating plants which snap at you as you enter a chamber.

However, **Phantom Club** is pretty hard on the eyes because some of the colour choices are terrible – would you believe white on green, or purple on white? It would have been much easier on the old retinas if it stuck to black backgrounds.

With a choice between rotational or directional control, joysticks or keyboards, **Phantom Club** is fun to play and fast moving.

It doesn't require too much thinking and planning – you don't, for instance, have to collect objects and work out what they do. The sheer size and speed of the game still makes it one of the most interesting of its type to appear since **Movie**■

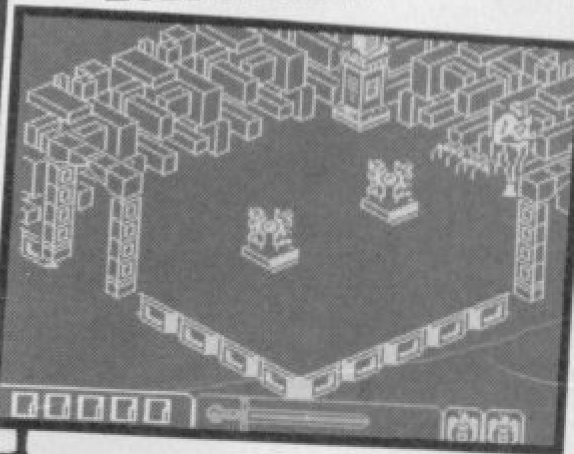
FACTS BOX

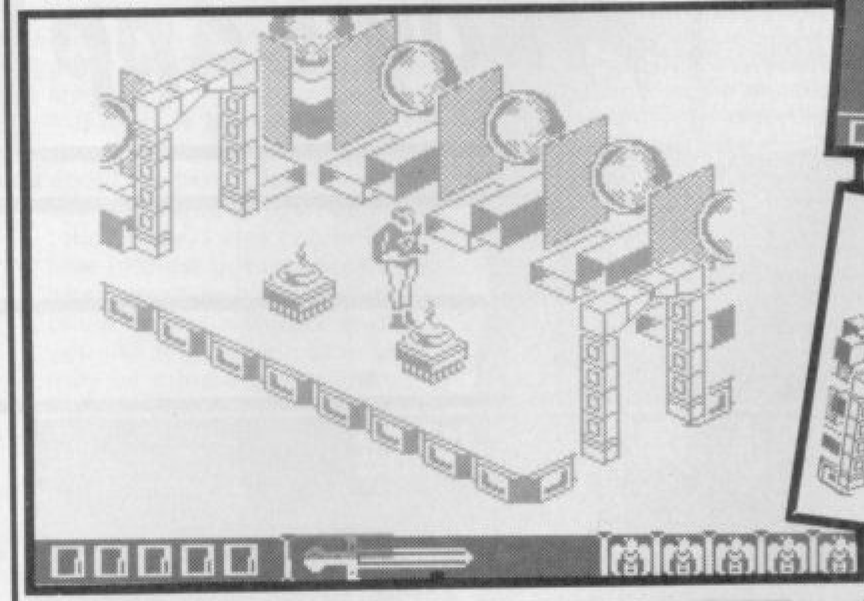
Nice isometric arcade adventure with unusual designs. Good fun despite some awful screen colours

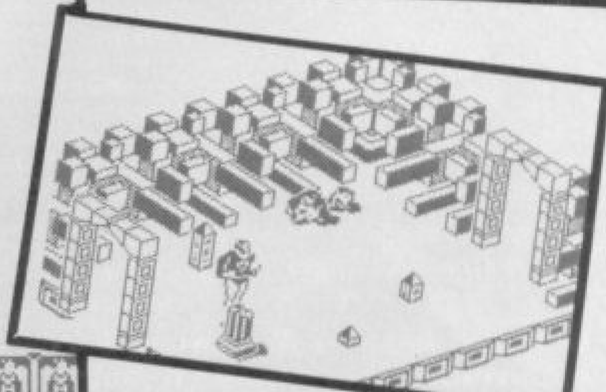
PHANTOM CLUB
Label: Imagine
Author: Dusko Dimitrijevic
Price: £7.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

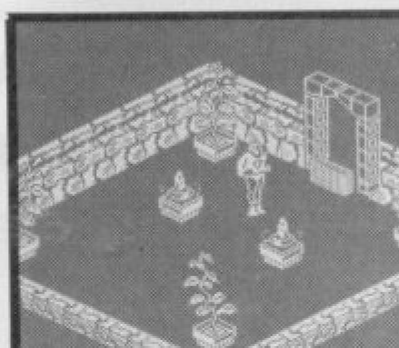
Reviewer: Chris Jenkins

★★★★☆
★★★☆☆ 7









Andy Capp

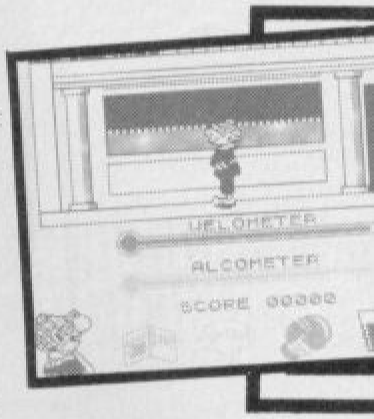
I wasn't much convinced of the idea of an **Andy Capp** computer game.

I always associated the cartoon with old men in pubs. It doesn't have quite the same grab factor as, say, **Top Gun** .

I expected tedium and, well, at least it's not quite like that.

The first point is the game looks exactly like the cartoon strip. Big characters, smoothly animated, and the backdrops are authentic-looking, all grim streets and dingy pubs. It even retains another important visual aspect of the strips – yep it's in black and white, otherwise we'd be in attribute clash city an' no mistake.

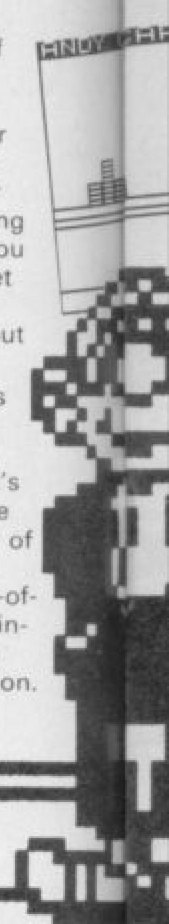
The cartoon is pretty sexist and so is the game but then I guess the character of Andy himself is pretty sexist too. The plot revolves around getting your dole cheque and giving it to your loyal wife Flo'. This



seemingly simple objective actually turns out to be astoundingly complicated. For a start, one of your first objectives is to actually make some money – this apparent contradiction is because you'll need, as Andy Capp, to keep your energy levels up by drinking beer. One of your first objectives therefore, is to find a pub. That's when you're going to need some money, unless, of course, you fancy a bit of thieving . . .

Thieving – ie not paying for anything in a shop or pub or taking an object you want for someone who wants something in return – is going to cause you to be arrested by PC Plod. Get arrested and you'll need yet more cash to pay your way out of jail.

The Andy character spends much of his time drinking, second only to drinking as a pastime is fighting. It's worth fighting people just for the sheer joy of seeing the authentic whirl-of-arms-and- legs-in-cloud-of-smoke fighting animation. Spiffing.



PROGRAMMERS

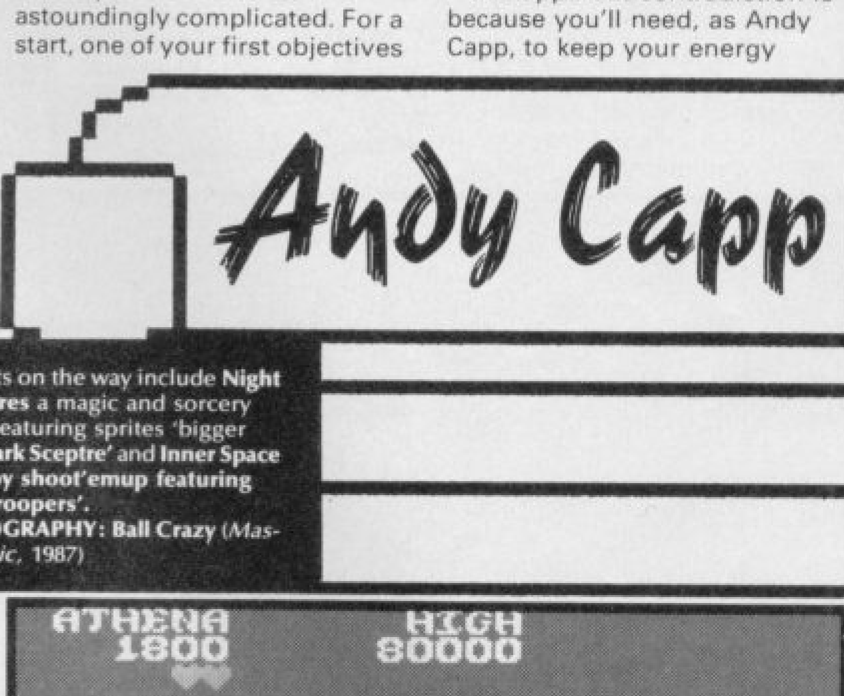
Andy Capp is the combined work of **Nigel Brown, Jim Tripp** and **Tim Macarthy** with Nigel and Jim doin most of the work on the Spectrum version. The graphics were by Nigel and the coding ws the joint work of Nigel and Jim. New projects on the way include **Night Creatures** a magic and sorcery game featuring sprites 'bigger than **Dark Sceptre**' and **Inner Space 'a zappy shoot'emup featuring stormtroopers'.**

SOFTOGRAPHY: Ball Crazy (*Mastertronic*, 1987)

It's got the lot. Sex. Violence. Giant insects. Bombs. Spaceships. Evil zombies. And Laser beams.

Why, then, is this arcade extravaganza – in which heroine Athena "cuts a bloody swathe down through the demon-infested hell of an oppressed world" – so pedestrian?

Once you've realised that the melon-breasted heroine on the cover is actually represented by a smurf-like gnome in the game, and that this sequel is basically the same idea as the original game **Athena** without the pretty background graphics, there's not much left to be



PSYCHO SOLDIER

excited about.

Psycho Soldier – a pretty inappropriate title if you ask me – is a three–level romp in which heroine Athena is armed with psychic blasts, bombs, and if you can find and pick up the appropriate icons, an invulnerable shield.

A flying saucer, which can shoot down a few enemies before it deposits Athena on the screen, starts each life. On the first level, Athena, surrounded by her revolving bombs, has to waddle through the caverns, jumping from level to level to avoid zombies. Stone walls can sometimes be blasted out of the way, and sometimes have to be avoided if you don't want to be crushed as the screen scrolls along.

There are six levels, each comprising thirty screens, and on each level some of the blocks are blasted aside to reveal icons which will augment your laser power, energy, or bombs. Each screen is displayed in a single colour. At the end of each level is a giant monster – on the first, a rapidly-striking snake – which can only be destroyed by a judicious combination of lasers and bombs. If you can find and destroy the egg, and shoot the globe which emerges from it, you will become indestructible until your energy runs out.

As you might have gathered, **Psycho Soldier** is competently done, nothing fantastic.

The sound effects, even on the 128K version which plays in in one go rather than having to be loaded level by level, are unremarkable, and the collision detection likes to please itself so you can't be too confident about finely-judged manoeuvres■

FACTS BOX

Much like Athena, but without the graphic invention. Fails to set the pulse racing

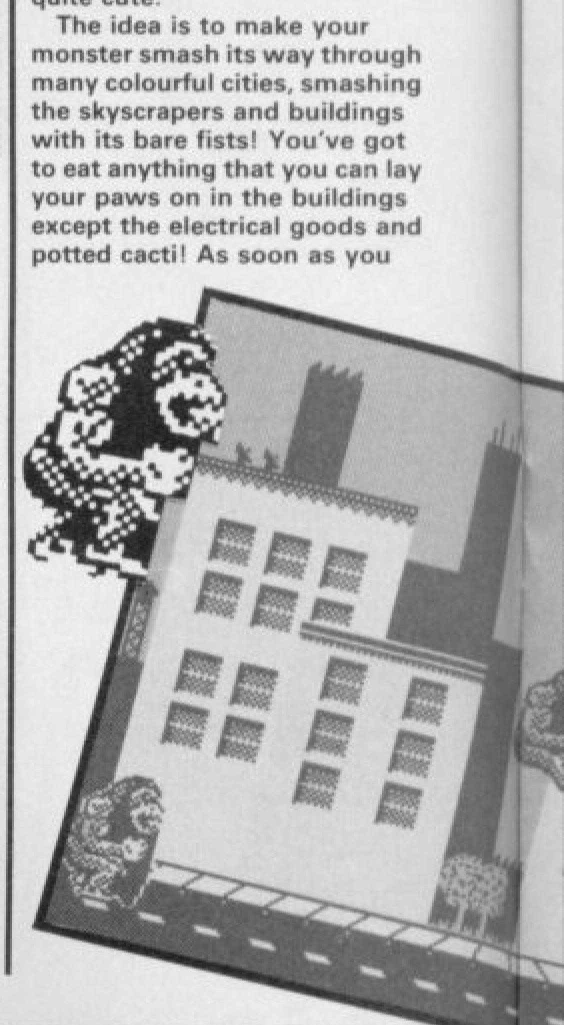
PSYCHO SOLDIER
Label: Imagine
Author: Source Software
Price: £7.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Tamara Howard

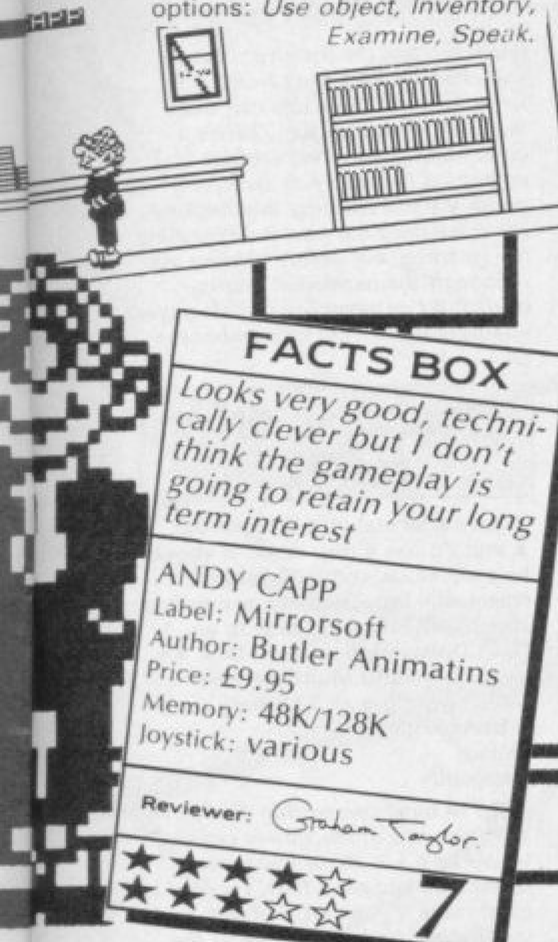
★★★★☆
★★★☆☆ 7

Fancy smashing a few cities with Lizzie the Lizard, Ralph the Wolfman and George the Gorilla? Yes? Good, 'cause Activision have bought out a new game called Rampage **where you have to smash your way through New York, San Francisco, Dallas, etc.** Rampage **has an odd plot, I mean just imagine controlling a sci-fi film monster such as King Kong, Godzilla and Werewolf!! But nevertheless the game is quite cute.**

The idea is to make your monster smash its way through many colourful cities, smashing the skyscrapers and buildings with its bare fists! You've got to eat anything that you can lay your paws on in the buildings except the electrical goods and potted cacti! As soon as you



There's a nifty icon-select system that runs along the bottom of the screen. Standard options: *Use object, Inventory, Examine, Speak.*



ARCADE ★ REVIEW

it's always worth trying *Examine* even in the most unlikely places – the papershop, for example, yields unexpected rewards.

Graphics are excellent, although the basic simplicity of the cartoon doesn't require a lot of detail. Still Mirrorsoft deserves credit for making the graphics so large, accurate and smooth.

If there is a problem with the game, aside from any doubts about the very basis for the licence, is that the gameplay is a touch slow. I was beginning to lose interest in the whole thing after about an hour. Still, that could be my prejudice and if you like the cartoon strip you may be more impressed■

FACTS BOX

Looks very good, technically clever but I don't think the gameplay is going to retain your long term interest

ANDY CAPP
Label: Mirrorsoft
Author: Butler Animatins
Price: £9.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Graham Taylor

★★★★☆
★★★☆☆ 7

have smashed one city a whole new city will appear, all ready for you to flatten.

Rampage can be played by three people, each controlling a different monster but if you want to play on your own, just get the computer to control the other two monsters who are trying to knock down more of the buildings than you can.

Sensibly enough, the nation ain't gong to let the monsters get away with all that savagery so they have brought in the military and gunship helicopters to get rid of them. You have to either punch them out of existence or stay out of their firing line.

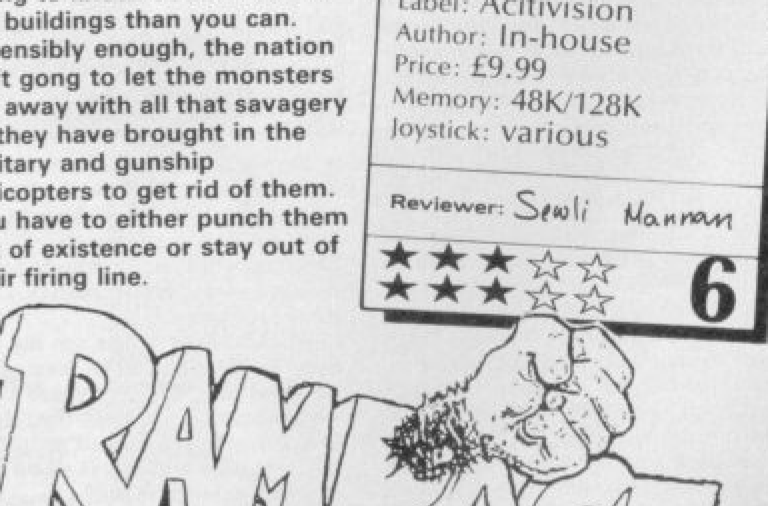
FACTS BOX

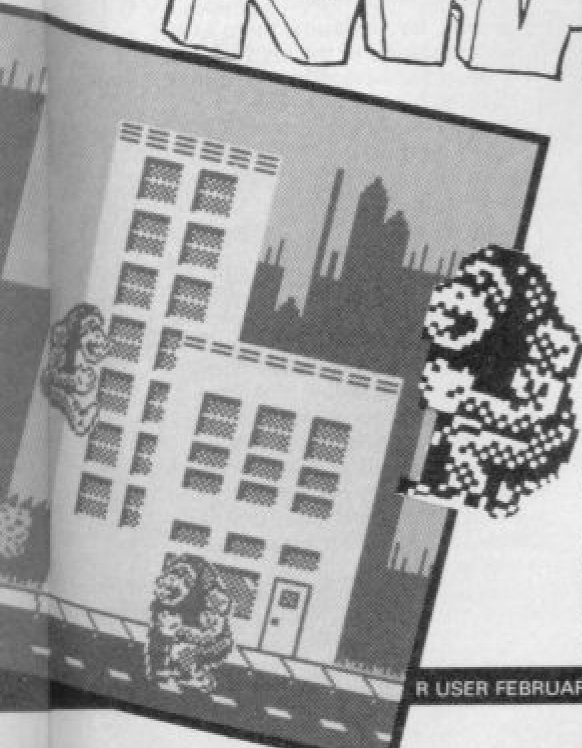
Promising coin-op loses much of its appeal on the way down the conversion lines. Mediocre

RAMPAGE
Label: Acitivision
Author: In-house
Price: £9.99
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Sewli Mannan

★★★☆☆
★★★☆☆ 6





There are 50 cities to be smashed and the monsters spend 3 days in each city, making a total of 150 different screens. Some of the graphics in Rampage, are great. The skyscrapers are very colourful and the definition is good. But the monsters are just blackish dull grey. There is the chance of you mislaying your monster in a mass of dot clash.

Altogether Rampage is a slow moving game and does get boring when you're just climbing skyscrapers and smashing them in. There are many better budget releases■

TWILIGHT

THE COLDITZ STORY

ARCADE Label: **Atlantis** Author: **In-house** Price: **£1.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **none** Reviewer: **Jim Douglas**

Utterly hopeless waste of money. An insult to everyone under the sun. Crass, unoriginal, uninteresting and untested

One wonders, as one wanders through the reasonably interesting combination of time, space and existence that is 'life', why a human being could waste any time at all playing The Colditz Story, **let alone programming it.**

It supposedly depicts – logically – your attempted escape from Colditz Castle. The screen shows a view of the castle on the left side, with each window illuminating as you pass through the room. Each room is identically represented in looking-into-a-box form at the top left hand (tiny) corner. Doors are shown on the walls, indicating a possible route, and there are occasionally ladders – no steps? – leading down to the next level. You begin in a room at the top of the castle, and work your way down.

Every now and then, the major part of the screen which has obviously been retained for immensely tedious object-handling messages ("You now have n items") will change to show a sort of courtyard or similar affair. In these sections, you have to dodge the guards by performing a heroic feat, like crawling behind oil barrels or swinging on a rope.

The game is bugged, with parts of the words Spectrum and Play popping up all over the place, instead of the graphics. There's absolutely no atmosphere, and the whole tragic mess should have been sent to the shredding plant at conception■

★☆☆☆☆
★☆☆☆☆ 2

PRO GOLF II

SIMULATION Label: **Atlantis** Author: **In-house** Price: **£1.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **none** Reviewer: **Jim Douglas**

Budget golf-sim. 1-4 players. Reasonable effort at making the greatet/dullest game in the world economically Spectrumised

Not a big golf fan, me. Haven't really got the Headroom angle on clubbing a little white ball. Still, Pro Golf **is reasonable enough.**

Up to four players can take part, and you have two course to choose from. Either Royal St George's or Lytham & St Annes. Along with the human players who may take part, there are a host of computer-generated opponents (max – 17), and there are the usual league table breakdowns of what's going on.

The graphics in these things are never much to talk about, and PG2 **is no different. Everything is pretty schematic and representative, with very little time having been spent on artistic endeavour.**

There are, however, all the little twiddley bits that you'd expect of a golf game – wind direction, ground conditions, club selection etc.

If you're the slightest bit interested in golf, this may be worth a look, though hardened addicts would be better off with the Leaderboard **series■**

★★★☆☆
★★☆☆☆ 5

PROGEN

WORK-OUT Label: **Gensoft 70 Nelson Road, Ipswich IP4 4DT** Author: **Alan Biggs** Price: **£7.50 (mail-order only)** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **none** Reviewer: **Chris Jenkins**

A good idea, poorly executed. This genealogy program could be called relatively disappointing

Tracing your ancestors may be a fascinating hobby, but I don't see that Progen **has much to add to it.**

Progen **allows you to record the family relationships of up to thirty people from five generations, using a tree diagram. Details of names, place of birth and so on are then entered on to "family group sheets" which can be printed out. Details of children are listed separately. Using the** ***Seed*** **and** ***Root*** **commands you can then produce different charts of relationships.**

A worthy effort, but since ProGen **can't tell you any information you haven't entered into it in the first place, it's ultimately a bit of a waste of time■**

★★☆☆☆
★★☆☆☆ 4

ZONE

SURGERY

Sinclair Surgery

Spectrum on the blink? Rupert Goodwins has a cure

Peculiar Joysticks

I have a Spectrum 48K and my Quickshot II joystick and interface broke recently. I took it back to my local shop, and they replaced the joystick with an SJS 1 and are sending me the interface.

I tried the joystick on my friend's Protek interface, but when I moved the stick the TV picture went funny. We tried it on another interface and the same thing happened again.

Is the Sinclair SJS 1 joystick meant for use with the 48K Spectrum?

Andrew Lloyd
Ferndale
Rhondda

No. In a burst of sheer individualism, Alan Sugar decided to wire the joystick port on the +2 and +3 differently to the way the rest of the world does it. The SJS range of joysticks will only work with this wiring, and will short out any other interface like Protek ot Kempston. This does mean that if you don't like the feel of the SJS 1 (and I don't) you've got a lot less choice for an alternative stick, so try and persuade your shop to give you a standard interface and joystick

Detecting a Load

Please could you tell me if there is any way to detect from the edge connector whether *Load ""* is entered on the keyboard?

Michael Critchlow
Welford
Northampton

Yes. But it isn't simple. When you type Load "", *the Spectrum starts to run a subroutine in the Basic Rom which, unsurprisingly, looks at the tape port and tries to load a program. The most obvious way to spot this happening is to build a bit of digital circuitry which plugs into the edge connector and turns on when the Z80 starts to execute code from the appropriate address. You'll have to decode the addres lines, and the M1 and IORQ control lines. If you haven't got the faintest idea what I'm on about, then get the Spectrum Hardware Manual from Melbourne House which explains all these terms in about 100 pages. Me, I've just got the one page . . . (cries of 'shame')*

Miserable Monitors

I have a Philips BM 7502 OOG monochrome monitor, which I intended to use with a 48K Spectrum. So far I have miserably failed to get any sort of picture whatsoever. The video input to the monitor is described as composite with −ve synch, 1V pp at 75 ohm.

I've tried various circuits to drive the monitor (two included), but with no success. Have I bought the monitor for nothing?

Michael Bergman
Holmsund
Sweden

There are numerous problems with getting a video output from old 48K Spectra. Different issues have different video signals coming out, and a number don't have any composite video at all (despite what the manual says). The best thing to do is to take the signal from the input to the TV modulator and put it through a simple amplifier – either of the ones you included would do. The modulator input is one of the leads coming from the metal box you plug the TV connector into – the other is 5 volts and easy to spot with a simple meter

Tape to Disc?

I had a 48K Sepctrum with about 50 games. I was quite contented, but somebody had to spoil it and buy me a +3 with disc drive.

How do I get all my tapes onto disc? I've bought some blank discs, and would like to sell my games on tape with the 48K Spectrum but keep copies on disc

Michael X
Cwmbran
Gwent

(Only the name's been changed to protect the guilty)
Unfortunately, my lawyer advises me that copying games to disc and then selling the originals is what the legal profession refer to as well out of order. Not to say illegal. Do don't do it. However, nobody will mind if you copy your games on to disc and keep the originals, and I rather think the Multiface III reviewed last issue will help you do that. Just be sure to destroy all copies if you decide to part with the tapes. If you don't you'll have to live with your conscience (and 50 games)

Centronics Standards

Is it possible to link my Spectrum to an Olympa Carrera electronic typewriter with Centronics Interface? I wrote to Olympia and they said that I can't.

I've already got a Centronics interface for my Spectrum with a Seikosha GP500A. Do I need another interface?

Edward J Fox
Hazlehead
Aberdeen

No you don't need another interface – Centronics interfaces, is a standard. You should be able just to plug in the Olympia instead of the Seikosha – you'll have to change the control codes to get plain text print-outs

What's up with my Spectrum?

I have a +2, but recently it stopped loading most of my games. Sometimes when I run the head cleaner through first it loads, but not very often. I've tried loading with the lid up, but nothing seems to work. What has happened? Can I fix it myself, or do I need to go to an expert?

Mark Baker
Eastbourne
E Sussex

Whaddya mean, go to an expert? Don't I count? Such tactlessness . . . A quick bit of observation will help to diagnose your problem. Turn the sound up on your TV whilst playing a tape through the +2. If you hear the pitch of the program's tones going up and down, then you've either got a worn motor or a stretched drive-belt – both of which need the tender care of a repair outfit. If the tones are steady but muffled, then your tape head has drifted out of alignment. Get a small jeweller's screwdriver (he has to be small otherwise he'll stop you taking it) and while the tape is playing turn the small screw beneath the hole above the tape controls in the +2 case. Whew. Don't turn it more than half a twist in either direction. You should hear the sound from the TV get much sharper at one point, and your tapes will them load again. If this doesn't happen, then it's off to the health farm for your Spectrum, I'm afraid

Mashed up Microdrive

I have an Issue 3 Spectrum with an Interface One and Microdrive. Sometimes, while the Microdrive is running, the machine crashes. The keys do not work, the Microdrive continues to run and the screen is totally unlike a normal crash. All of the normal 8x8 character squares are corrupted, and there's rubbish in the *Border* area. The effect is not unlike a TV with vertical and horizontal holds set incorrectly. The only solution is to switch off everything.

When I switch back on again, the computer and interface and Microdrive unit all work satisfactorily, but the cartridge that was in the drive when calamity struck will not read and needs to be reformatted with total loss of data. Why does this happen? How can I stop it? How can I recover the information on the Microdrive without reformatting?

DG Honeyman
Deans Way
Warwick

I can't be 100% certain, but I suspect a faulty ULA in the Spectrum itself. This is a repairshop job, but since the problem happens rarely it's going to be difficult to find. Try and spot a common factor in the crashes – has the Spectrum been switched on for a long time? Is it unusually hot? – as this can make them easier to explain. There's a good chance that the cartridge is corrupted because you switch off while it's still running, not because the crash itself has hurt it. Try pulling the cartridge out before turning off. Although the handbook warns against it I've never found it damages anything on my QL (remember the QL? . . .)

What disc-drive for 128

I have a Sinclair 128K Spectrum, and I'd like a disc drive. It should be good value, compatible and reasonably fast. I've been wondering about a Multiface 1/128 with an Opus Discovery or a Swift Disk. Or would a +3 and Multiface 3 be better? I enclose an SAE for a reply

G Burtenshaw
Shifnal
Shropshire

The most compatible disc drive (also one of the slower ones) would be a +3. But a Discovery (make sure you get a 128K version) is good value if you can find one, and the Disciple interface is one of the speedier on the market. Bear in mind that any disc-based Spectrum games will be released on +3 format only, and that there's a sporting chance that CP/M will be available. So I'd go for the +3.

And, aargh! No SAEs please. Chances are, your question will have been answered in a reply to someone else that gets published, or I can't help, or I'm too darned busy. I can't guarantee a personal reply. Sorry. Really, sorry

Spectrum Amnesiac

I have a Spectrum +, Rotronics Wafadrive and a Seikosha Gp100A printer which is driven from Pirma Dorsch-Electronic German Centronics Interface connected to the through-port of my Wafadrive. I have three problems.

First, about four weeks ago my Spectrum lost part of its memory. This was duly fixed by Video Vault very promptly, but since then the Wafadrive hasn't worked properly. It's been very erratic – is this a drive or a computer problem?

Second, do you know there I can get a translation of the manual and will **Tasprint** work with my printer?

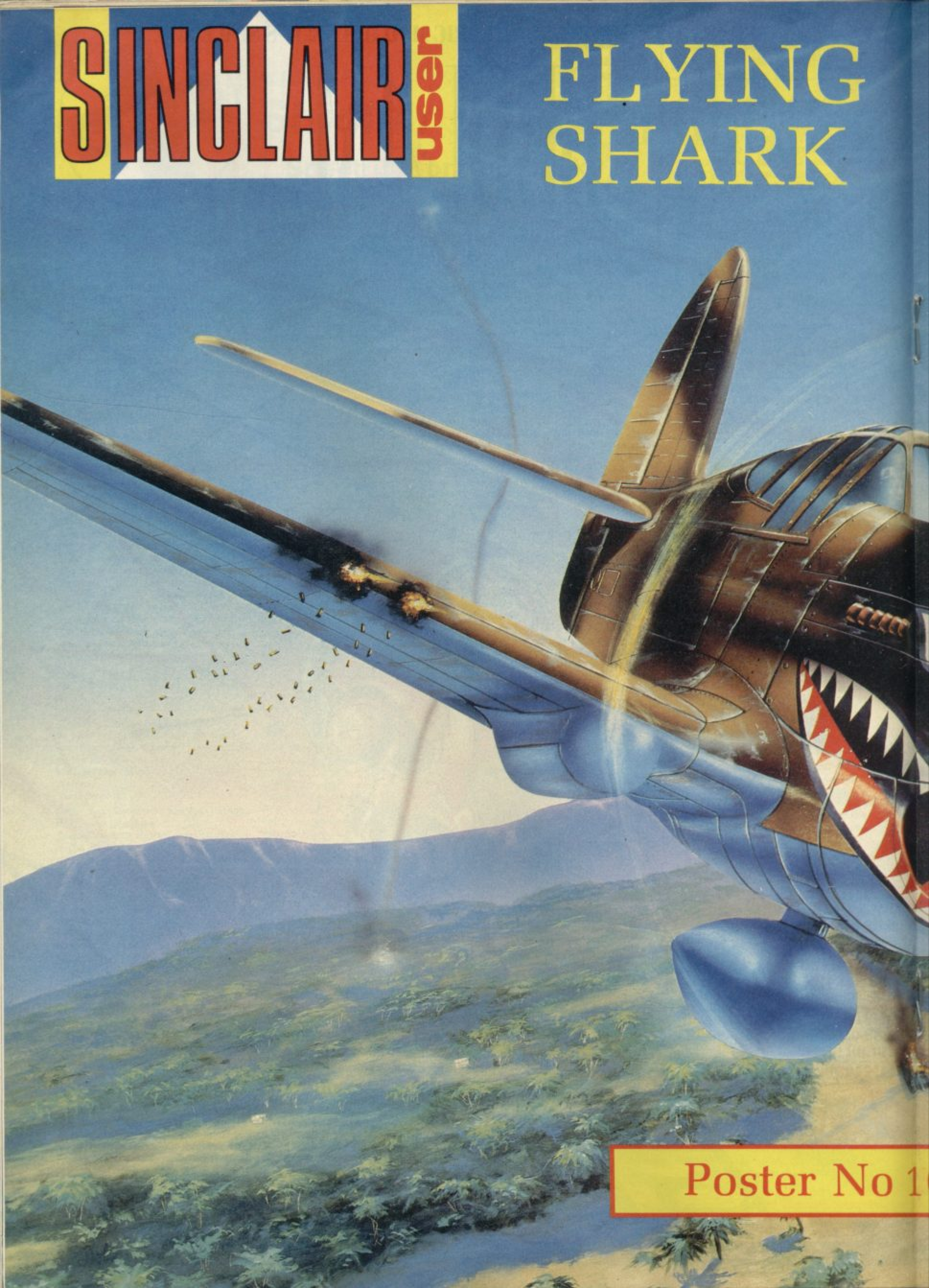
Thirdly, my Comcon joystick interface refused to work with the printer interface, the Wafadrive crashes on initialisation. This has always happened

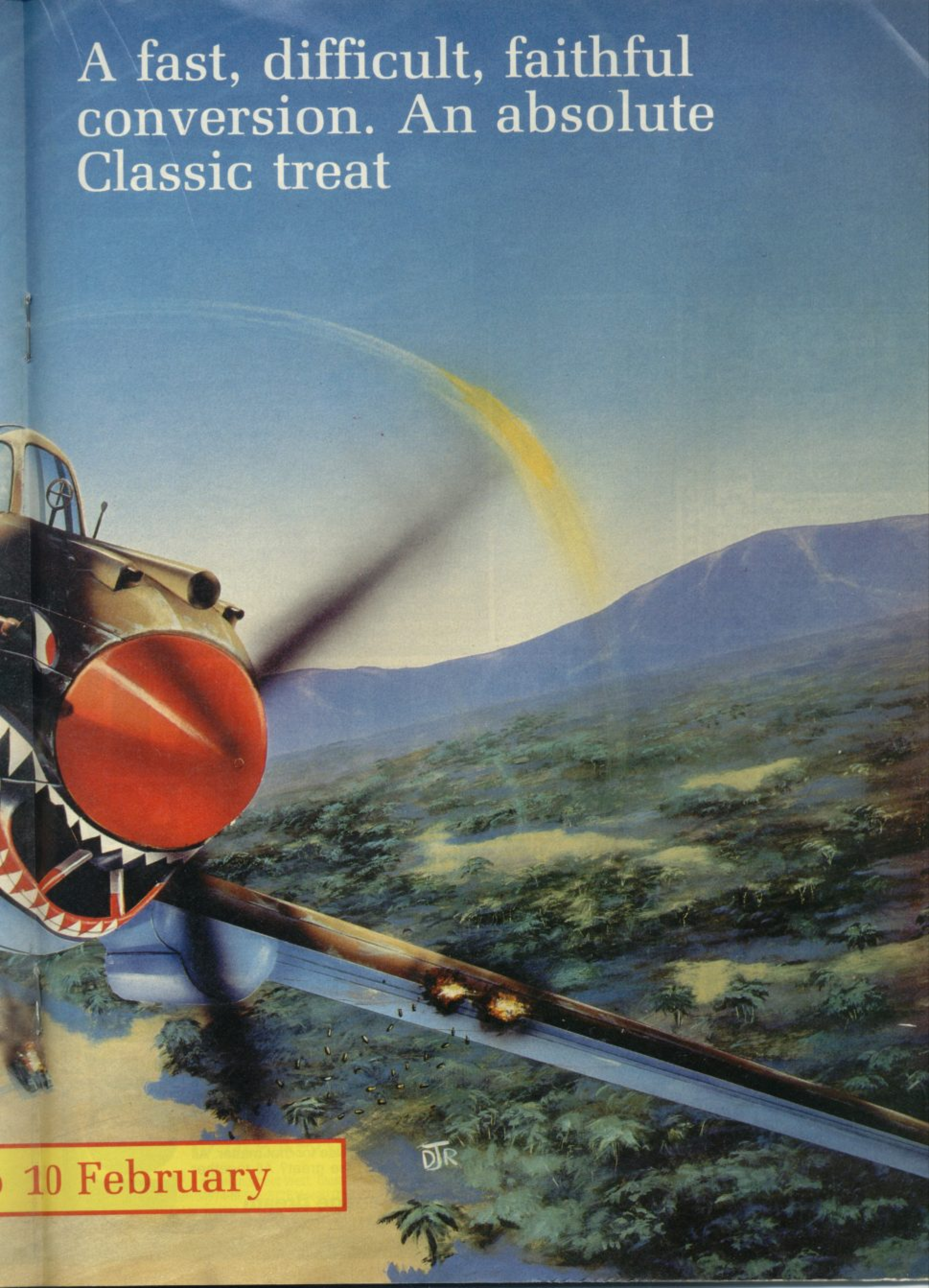
J Waldron-Kelly
St Athan
S Glamorgan

I'd guess that your computer is still at fault. As to the translation, all I can do is ask the sterling band of fellow Spectrum owners out there for assistance. ***Tasprint*** *should interface happily and your Comcon interface is most likely messing up the Z80's timing when it's used with the mystery interface. The Wafadrive is quite sensitive to timing funnies, and there's not a lot you can do about it*



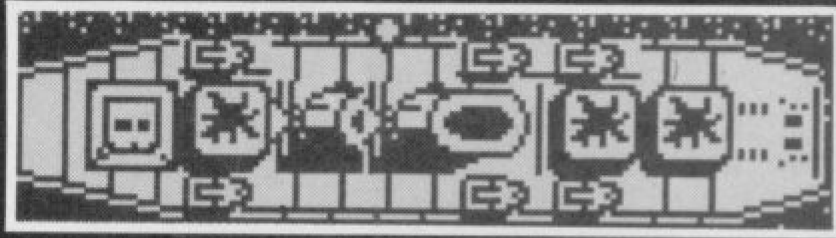
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SINCLAIR user
FLYING
SHARK
Poster No 1


A fast, difficult, faithful conversion. An absolute Classic treat
DJR
s 10 February

FLYING SHARK

Don your baggy trousers! Flick your white silk scarf across your face! Pull on your goggles and flying cap! Take a good gander at the wind sock! Climb into your cockpit! Chocks away! Conn-



tackkt!!!

Play *Flying Shark*, that's what we're trying to say. *Flying Shark* is the latest from Firebird, an absolutely marvellous conversion from the popular coin-op. Soar around the place in your little bi-plane, take out enemy planes, tanks and ships, and generally earn yourself as many medals as possible. You, too, can be a hero.

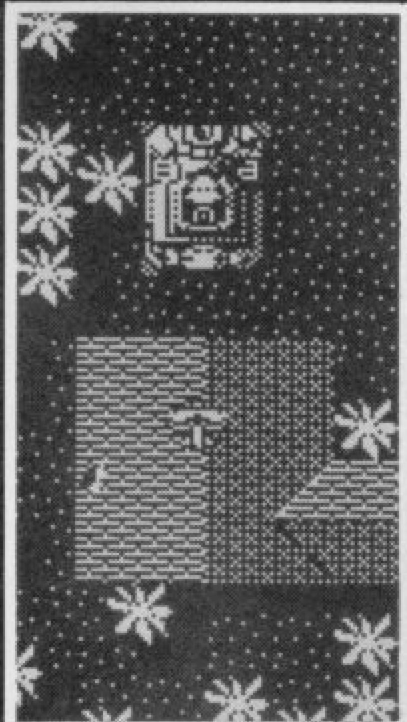
We like *Flying Shark* a lot. We gave it a Classic. In fact we liked it so much, we're going to offer it to you at a very special price. Due to extraordinary generosity, Firebird have given us £1.00 off *Flying Shark*, so it'll only cost you £6.95! Brilliant eh? Absolutely spiffing.

Normal rules apply, snip out the coupon with a sharp propeller blade, write out a small chequette/postal order, and send the lot, together with your name and address to the address on the coupon. What could be simpler? OK Ginger, Chocks away!!!■

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I gotta get that game today
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SU's got it cheap, they say,
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Yoh! (Nice rhyme, Tambo. Yoh! indeed – Ed) Ocean's conversion of the hugely successful **Combat School** is great. And to make sure that none of you readers miss out on this superb package, we at SU have arranged a wonderful money-off package for you. Just cut out the coupon, send it with a cheque for £6.45 to the address below, together with your name and address, and you can have a brilliant, and cheap, copy of **Combat School.** Limber up on the monkey bars, swim the ferocious waters, canoe that canoe, paddle that steamer, tote that barge, pull that bale, qualify for the dangerous mission.

In short, become a US Marine for a lot less than it would cost you in America. Or anywhere else for that matter. All thanks to US and Ocean. Aren't we great? All together now . . .

I don't want no teenage dream
I just want my F-14 . . .

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C.O.D.E. DOMINIC ROBINSON T.A.L.K.



Dominic Robinson was the man who earned himself a place in everybody's hall of fame when he converted the sparkling Uridium **to the Spectrum.**

Since that illustrious turning point in his life, he's zizzled us with Zynaps, **astounded us with** Anarchy **and now he's, well he's just, f-, f-, flabbergasted us with** Flying Shark. **What better person could we think of then, to talk to about cruising round the Med in a leaky yacht, cheating at Monopoly and associated games, and who could possibly be more fun to play the SU 'What are you?' game with? That's what we thought, and here are the answers to these things, and more . . .**

In the beginning the word was . . .

Programmable calculators. I started programming things, if you could call it that, just before the ZX81 came out. Before the ZX81 there wasn't an awful lot else apart from these programmable calculators actually.

What sort of programs did you come up with on a calculator then?

Numbery one mostly. Things like *Mastermind,* all completely dull and not very clever, but I was thoroughly impressed with them at the time.

And after the numbery things?

I did routines and demos and stuff like that. I didn't put together a complete game until I did the conversion of Uridium **for Hewson.**

How did that happen?

Well, like everyone else in the civilised world I was very impressed with Uridium, **and I started to write some routines for the Spectrum. Then I saw that Hewson were advertising for programmers and I sent the demos off to them. They liked my stuff, and I got the job.**

And hugely impressive it was too. How did ***Zynaps*** *happen?*

I was staring at my desk one day, when Andrew Hewson said, 'Write me a horizontal scrolling shoot-'em-up.' I'll try anything once, so off I went.

How long did ***Zynaps*** *take to complete?*

About five months I guess. Some things could have been improved I think, but there just wasn't the time. Overall though, I was pretty pleased with it I think.

Do you play computer games yourself?

Well my all-time favourite is Commando, **but that's a bit old now. I'm a great fan of Andrew Braybrook's though.**

Do you have a lot of his games at home?

No, but he sits next to me at work, so he could probably knock up a game for me while I wait.

It's all right for some isn't it? What do you do in your spare time then, if you don't play games? Is there anything else that brings meaning to your life?

Well, I don't seem to have had a lot of spare time in the last six months, what with Zynaps **and the** Flying Shark **conversion I seem to have been working non-stop. I like to read a lot, mainly Sci-Fi or fantasy books, you get ideas for programs from things like that.**

Favourite authors?

Ian Watson, Larry Niven, need I go on?

Well you could, but I've never heard of either of 'em. Films?

Yes, like them. Again, Sci-Fi films are good and my all time favourites have to be the *Alien* films, brilliant atmosphere in both of them.

Favourite actor?

Not really, quite like Jack Nicholson (doesn't everyone?) and I like Sigourney Weaver, from the *Alien* films. She's great.

Anything else that you do purely for fun?

I eat a lot. Especially Italian food, but I can't stand McDonalds. Everyone else in the Universe seems to live off them and I hate them. I don't know what that says about my character.

Probably nothing actually, but your taste in music just might.

Music? Anything rocky. Pat Benattar, quite like Kate Bush, and I've even been to see Dire Straits, at the NEC last year.

Well we won't hold that against you. Do you cheat at Monopoly?

All the time. It's so trivial, there's no point in playing unless you cheat mercilessly. Otherwise the thing would drive me crazy.

Talking of driving, do you?

No, never bothered to learn, I never seemed to have the time. but I may well do so now I've got a bit of time on my hands.

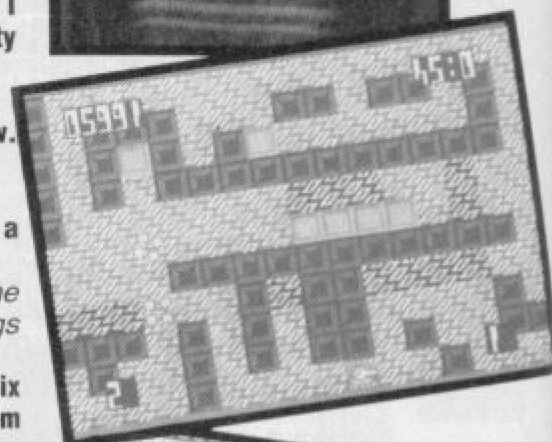
Aren't you working at the moment?

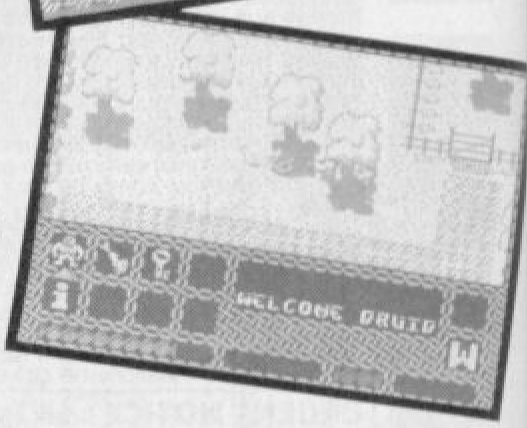
Well I'm starting to work on the ST at the moment, so I'm just really having a bit of a play with it to see what it can do at the moment.

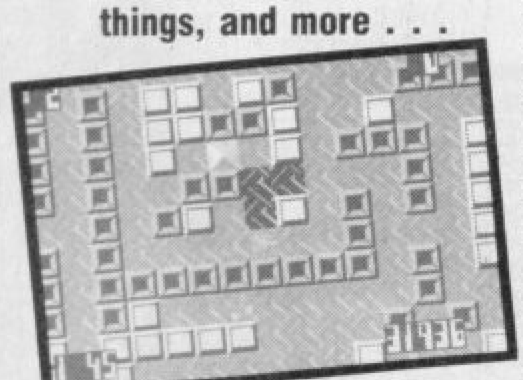
Well that's nice for you. And finally, some completely trivial questions. Where would you most like to go on holiday?

I'd quite like to go round the Mediterranean in a yacht. Just cruise around and soak up the sun. A nice lazy holiday like that would be right up my street.

Me too. Let's stop.









SOFTOGRAPHY

Uridium (Hewson 1986)
Zynaps (Hewson 1986)
Anarchy (Hewson 1987)
Flying Shark (Firebird 1987)


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ÖUTL

JAP

A special All Japa
which Mark Jen
some very odd

TOYS

The big theme in the Japanese toy market which is around a year ahead of ours is "interactive". Everything either speaks to you, attacks you or, at least, flashes a couple of multi-colour lights at you. Top toy at the moment is the Power Gun used with the *Captain Power* TV show. This is transmitted on one of Tokyo's four cable TV channels (there are eight conventional channels as well) and consists of almost non-stop spaceship chases, laser battles and bug eyed monsters. Flashing



panels superimposed on almost anything that moves allow you to blast away at the screen, with your Power Gun recording your hits. Unfortunately there is no chance of the show being seen on UK TV as the broadcasting authorities won't allow children's shows which are linked directly to products but a videotape version, complete with gun, should be here soon.

If you're into Zoids Tokyo is the place to be. The Japanese are two or three years ahead of us in Zoid technology, and have gigantic models which make Godzilla look like a gerbil.

And Lazer Tag is very popular too . . .

TELEPHONES



The Japanese love to play with telephones. Perhaps because they're all-digital and make lots of bleeping noises. In the UK you can buy a pocket-sized data bank for phone numbers – but in Japan, a similar unit (for around £25) will actually bleep the digits into the phone system to make the call for you.

Lots of phones fold in half, many play music to you instead of ringing, and some look like spaceships, robots, Mickey Mouse, or even telephones . . .

VIDEO

Japanese video is like European video but with the word "Super" tacked on to it. There's no such thing as Betamax – it's all Super Betamax with claimed 20% improvement in picture quality, 50% increased head life, auto power on tape insertion, colour control ("to let you compensate for inferior colour of repeatedly taped copies" – sounds pretty illegal to me) three tape speeds, cable TV input and real-time counter (Sony SL-S480, £350 or less).

Laser Disk is popular too – they must have some films available! *Sony's LDP-190* (£600 or so) has a mike input so you can sing along with your favourite *Karaoke* disk. *Karaoke*, as you must know, is the Japanese art of singing along with backing tracks of popular music – you can do it in b ars, in taxis, on TV or at home – as long as you don't do it in my earshot.

Lots of picture-in-picture TVs too, and a totally flash *TA-AV1 Audio Visual Control Centre* which gives your video/hi-fi system Dolby noise reduction, Surround Sound, zoom into picture, multispilt delayed pictures using a digital frame store, picture-in-picture, pixel magnification and much more (£500). Personally I can't quite see the point but it looks neat . . .

HI-FI

Japan invented the Walkman and convinced us that we all had to have one. CB Walkman units are pretty common in the UK now, as are AM/FM Radio Walkman combinations – although in Japan, a lot of these have TV sound bands as well. Cassettes will silly names such as

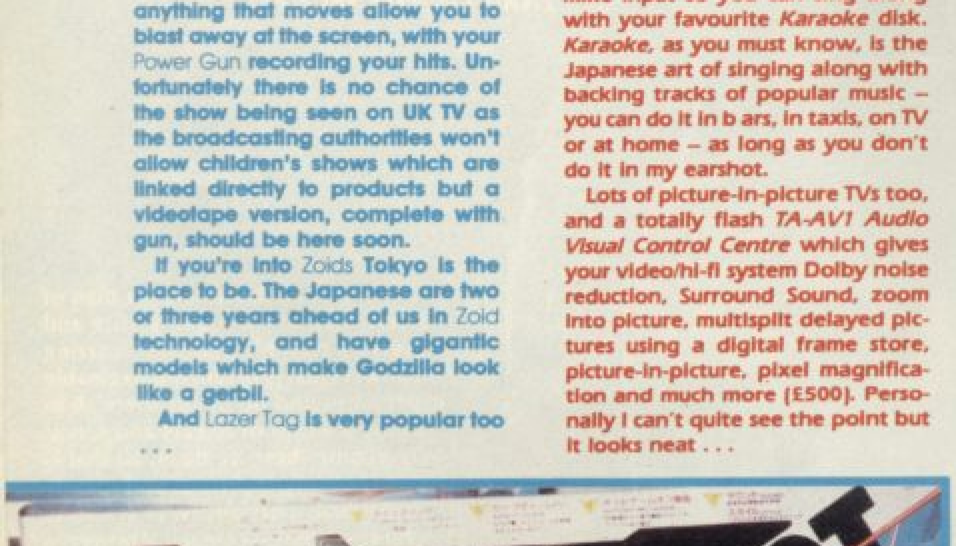


"Exist!" and "Cologne" (no, it doesn't smell of anything) are also available in silly lengths such as C-46, C-50 and C-80 – no-one knows why.

Tokyo is also full of DAT players, the new digital tape recorders which are giving the music industry anti-pirating people such a scare – but my favourite is still Aiwa's bright pink, double-cassette, AM/FM/TV stereo CS-TW80 ghetto blaster which doubles as a telephone answering machine. Very strange.

PECULIAR GADGETS

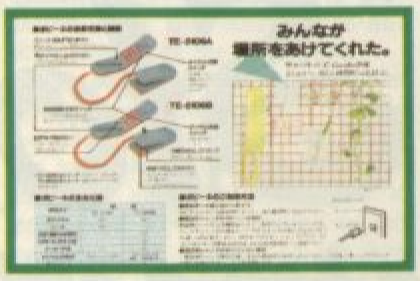
Lotsa Japanese gadgets but mostly they only work with other gadgets you can buy in Japan. NEC's *Net Jack*, for instance, is a bright-blue-and-pink hand-held keypad for getting in-





LANDS
PAN

these *Outlands* in
kins visits Japan and finds
things indeed . . .



to the Japanese interactive banking and home shopping systems. Sony's *Repeat Learning System* is an intercom-like gadget costing around £90, intended to playback odd magnetic strip bearing cards which contain lessons like *"English for Beginners"* or *"High School Telephone Tutor"* (the Japanese telephone system is so complicated that you need lessons to use it).

But "Gadget of the Year" must be the *Card Voice* from Casio. Choose one of three memories and hit the Record button and you can speak into it for up to 38 seconds. Flip the Message Recorded flag and leave it on the hall table for your loved one when he or she comes in from work. Push the Play button to reproduce the words "I've run away with the milkman dear, your dinner's in the dustbin". In other words, it's a mini sound sampler which effectively replaces the totally low-tech pencil and paper for around £30.

Actually several companies make equivalents of the *Card Voice*, and many other credit card sized gadgets – pens, propelling pencils, magnifying glasses, took kits, make-up boxes, transparent solar-powered calculators, world time zone indicators, telephone diallers, English-to-Japanese translators (5,000 word vocabulary) and much more. We know there's a shortage of space in Japan, but this is ridiculous . . .

VERY NAUGHTY

The Totally Illegal **Dual Disk Drive Protected Software Duplicator** (cost about £85) does exactly what it says it does! Funny Place Japan . . .

FUNNY NAMES

Tokyo's shops and tube stations are well provided with English signs, and the Japanese seem fascinated with the idea of becoming Westernised. This leads to some pretty silly pseudo Western marketing names - a computer called *Baby Maker*, an earplug called *Nude Series* or a set of crayons called *Frank Chickens* (where the band got its name).





COIN OP OF THE MONTH

Rainbow Islands is Taito's sequel to the cute and addictive Bubble Bobble **and, in fact, features the same two well known heroes Bub and Bob.**

Like Bubble Bobble, Rainbow Islands **is instantly addictive and very playable, and again the story line is simple. Make your way to the Rainbow Islands to rescue an entire village of people who've been kidnapped by the 'Big Black Devil'.**

Off you go rainbow hopping your way across the screen to get to the island at the top of each screen. Needless to say, baddies attack you and can be killed by using your new found skills in Rainbow Magic. Casting a rainbow into the path of a persistent enemy will cause him to trip up and die.

There are seven levels of increasing complexity and each level consists of four rounds also increasing in difficulty.

Rainbow Islands **must be one of the most colourful games around with bright, bright primary colours painted on simple blocky graphics. Don't let the rather childish look of the game put you off.** Rainbow Islands **requires some initial skill in negotiating safe paths up the screen – you'll quickly become hooked.**



COIN-OPS OF THE MONTH FEBRUARY

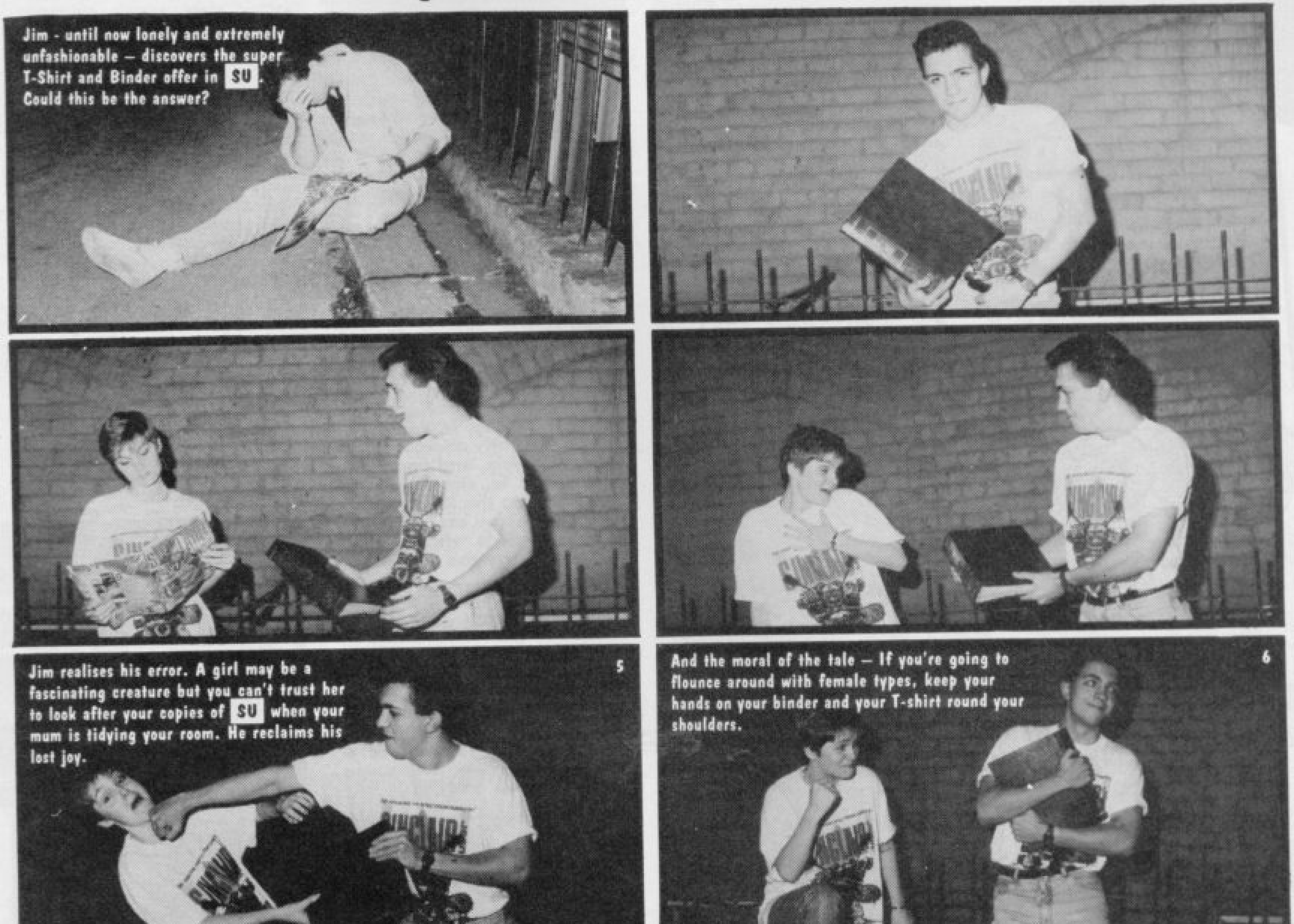
Operation Wolf	Taito
Street Fighter	Capcom
Guerilla Wars	SNK
Football	——
Xenophobe	Bally
Thundercade	Taito
Typhoon	Konami
Road Blaster	Atari
Midnight Landing	Taito
Time Soldier	SNK

This list is compiled from one arcade in London's West End. Thanks to John Stergides of Electrocoin.

SPECIAL OFFER

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BACKGROUND NOISE

Background Noise looks behind the top games of the moment and speaks to the programmers who sweated blood to produce them. Background Noise looks from the author's point of view — at the particular programming problems and the way they were solved

SUPER HANG-ON

When first asked to convert Super Hang-On to the Spectrum we decided it had to be a lot better than Enduro Racer, (which we had been quite impressed with when we first saw it), and hopefully better than the then only rumoured Out Run conversion.

An improvement in speed had to be a major factor. As 'Super' was much more a race game, we had to improve considerably on the 5-6 frames a second of Enduro. What we actually ended up with was 10-12, depending on how much was on the screen. These seemingly strange numbers are calculated by dividing the number of frame fly-backs per second, 50, by the number the game takes to do one game cycle.

The game is drawn to a back screen and a flag set for the interrupt routine to download it when it gets the chance. This means we can start calculating the next game screen before you've seen the present one, as the screen is always downloaded before we start to write to the back screen again. This means never having to wait for frame flyback and gives us more speed. Also, side objects were limited to character square movement horizontally, and the maximum sprite size was not to have an area bigger than 64 character squares, so we have 10*6, 8*8, 12*5, etc.

For a cleaner screen display, we decided on Outline masks for the sprites. This meant we could use the usual table method for storing them and so our graphic data was doubled, however as the added cost in time for using them was only an extra ⅓ we decided it was worth it.

We thought colour attributes would be a good idea, but knew we would have to avoid clash. The way we did this was to not colour in a character until at least four pixels of the sprinter were in it. This meant that sometimes a few pixels were not coloured in, an effect we thought preferable to a whole square being coloured when only one pixel was in it. This is most effective when the road and mountains move up and down the screen.

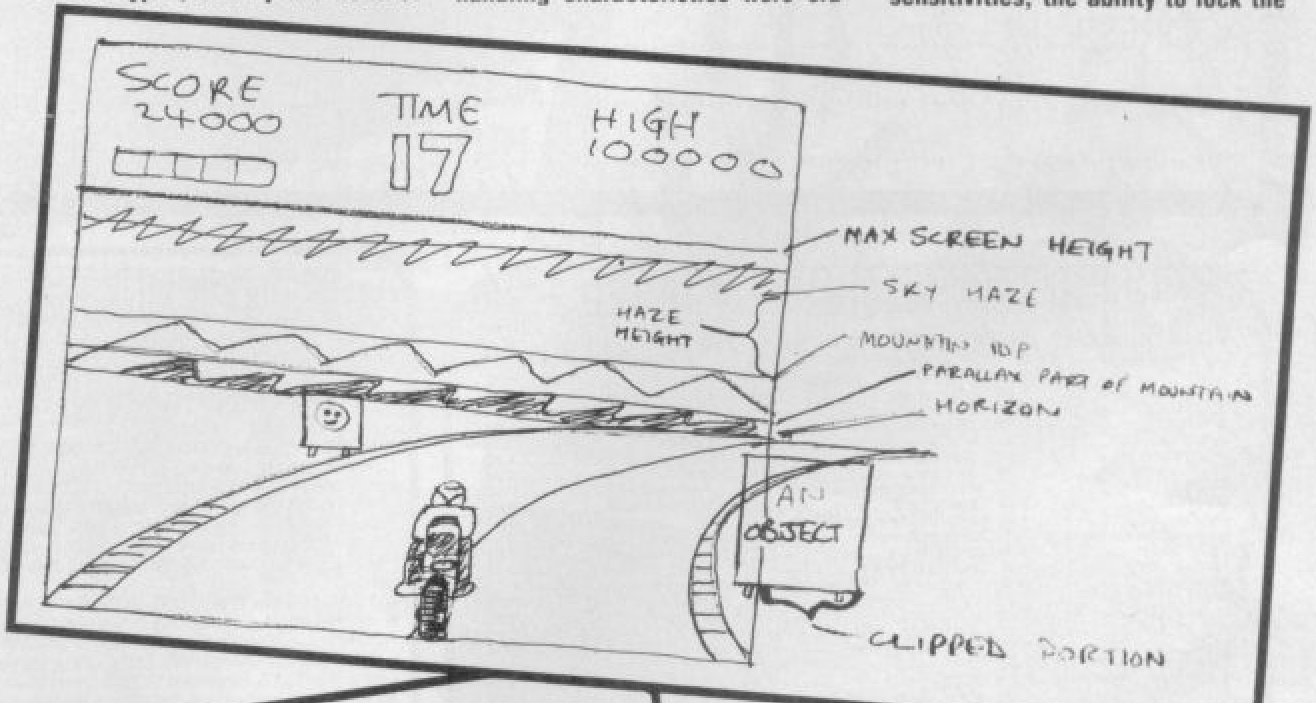
The road was the biggest problem. It had to turn thereby forcing some sprites off the screen, rise and fall sometimes obscuring the mountains, sprites and even distant parts of itself. The ideas was to give you a feeling of driving along so you felt yourself travelling aorund a bend, rather than as with other road games, sat at the front of a projected curve, with moving side objects simulating the movement.

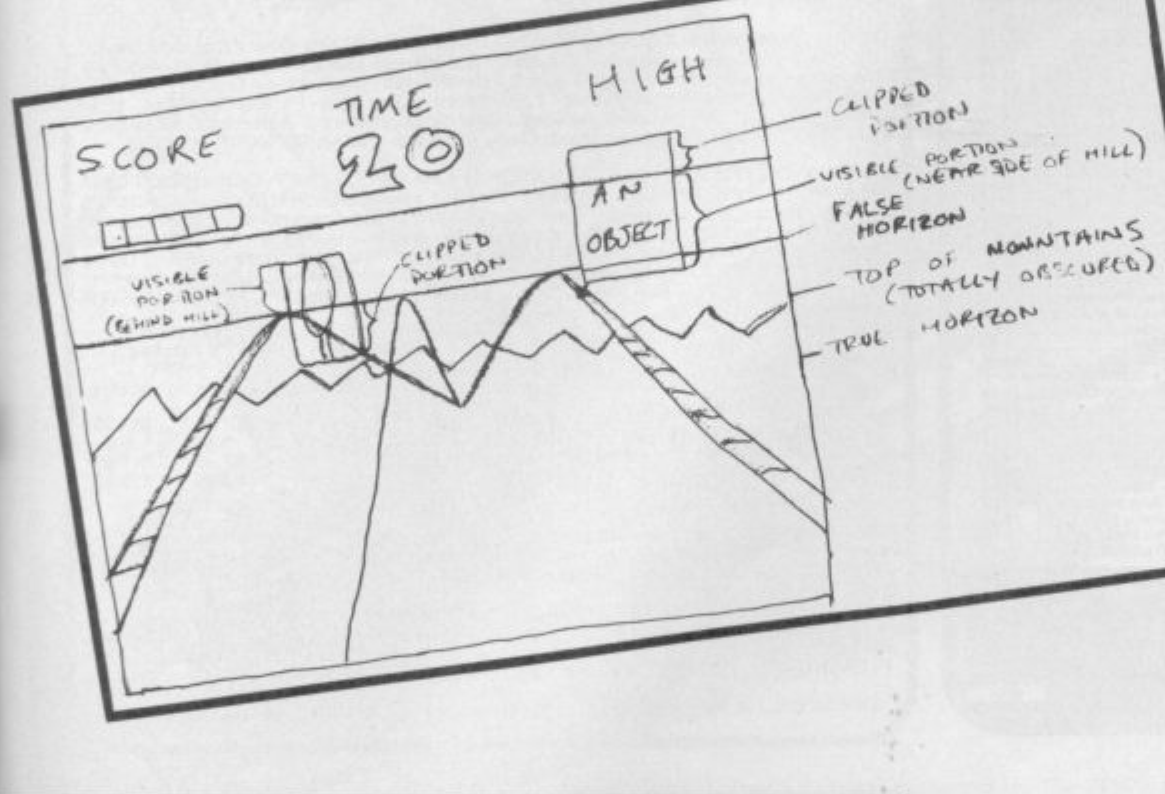
To make the road 'obscure' things, we made a note of the current highest point of the road at the beginning of each section when the turn and hill information is processed. When the sprites are put on they 'look forward' to see how much road is covering them, and lop the corresponding amount off the bottom (which may be the whole height of the sprite).

Graphics were a major problem, memory wise. We needed eight different sizes of each sprite, and we just didn't have room to store them. From one checkpoint to another is eight sections of road, where a section consists of a 30 degree bend, a 30-90 S-bend, a straight, etc. There are fifteen different types, each having its mirror, and four hill types, with up and down of each type. In each checkpoint only four different graphics are shown with only two per section, and a maximum of changing each time you go through a checkpoint. So, four buffers were used and the sprites shrunk into them at the start of the game. When you drive through a checkpoint, the sprites are shrunk fairly transparently to the player. As the extended play message flashes, every eight game cycles, a sprite is shrunk. There are, in fact, a few tiny pauses as this is being done, but it is not too noticeable.

Having got most of the programming problems solved, we turned out attention to gameplay. The bike handling characteristics were crucial. As you ride round a bend, you are thrown out by it, and you counter this by leaning into it. However, your speed is also taken into account and if you are not capable of taking the bend at your present speed, then you skid off, at a rate dependent on your speed. To stop skidding you must slow down, either by lifting off the Turbo button for a second, or braking, as your lean then has more effect on the road. To stop skidding you should also take a 'Racing Line' around bends, as the inside fo bends have a higher stickitudinosity than the outside.

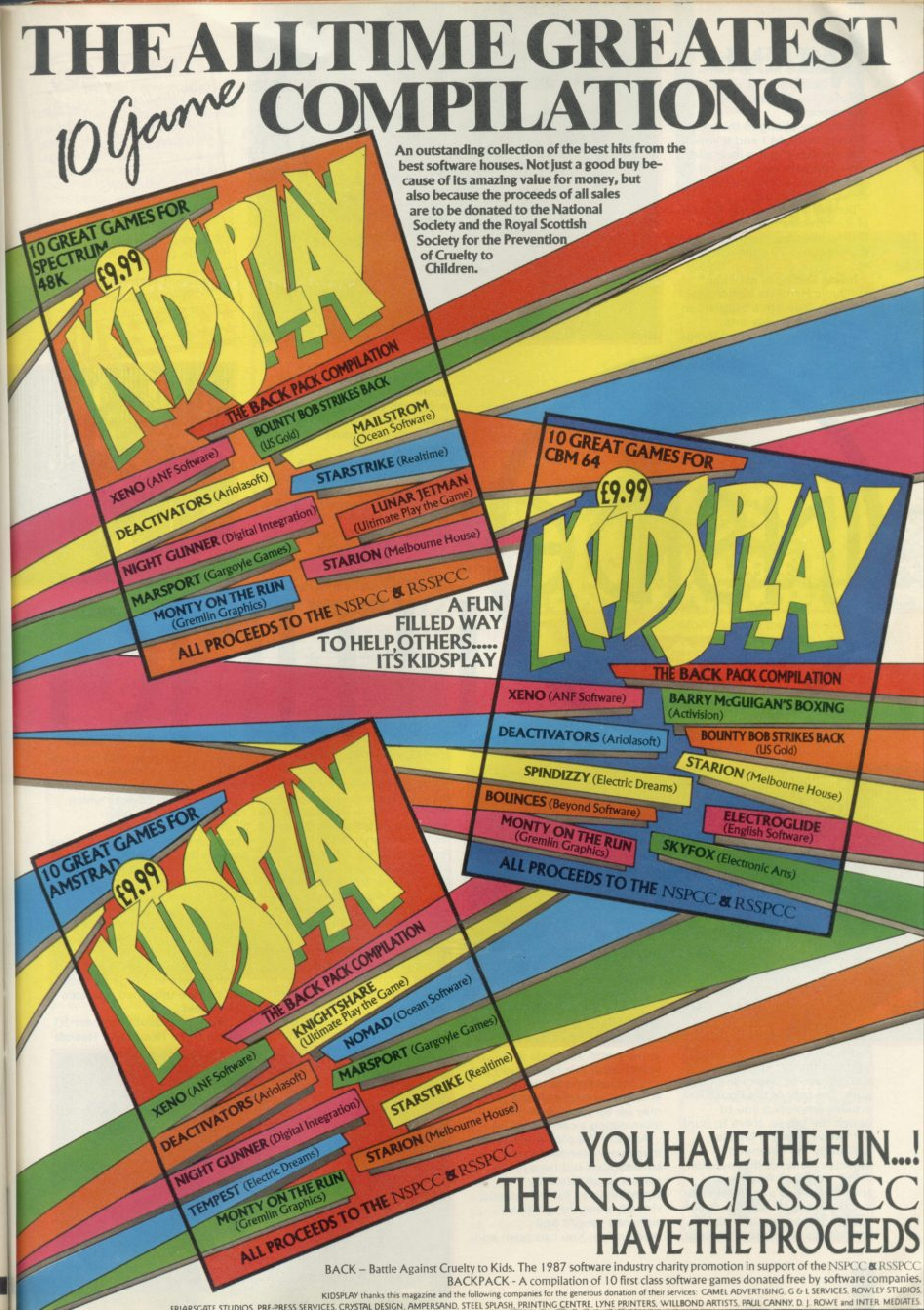
With details like different bike sensitivities, the ability to lock the bike at an angle by holding down left and right together, an attributes On/Off option, intelligent joystick detection and four completely self-contained games for the four continents you must race round, we were pretty happy with the end result. We'll always know it as Super Cling-On though . . .



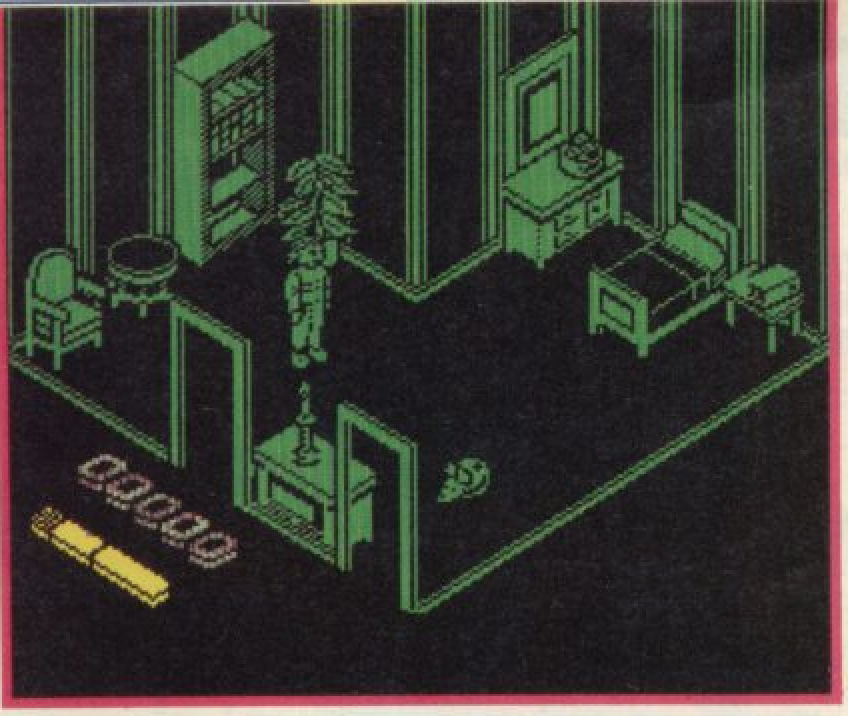




BY CHRIS WOOD AND ZZKJ



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FACTS BOX

Astoundingly detailed 3D collect and explore game. The best 3D game since Head Over Heels

INSIDE OUTING
Label: The Edge
Author: Michael St Aubyn
Price: £8.99
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Graham Taylor

★★★★★★★★★★ 10

INSIDE OUTING

SINCLAIR USER CLASSIC

Now there have been quite a few 3D room-based games since **Knight Lore** first stunned everybody.

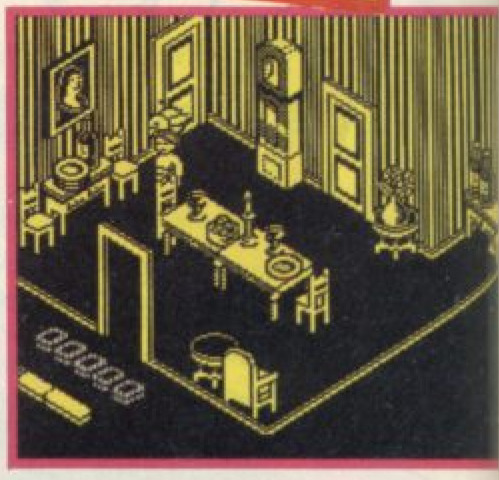
The Edge changed things a bit with **Fairlight I** and **II** which took the basic game look and added an extended range of possible options – objects to collect and the like.

But even that wasn't the end of it – now we have **Inside Outing** possibly the most sophisticated 3D room game yet.

Inside Outing is set in an authentic Hammer horror type mansion. You are a burglar, an expert in the dodgy arts. Specifically you can find things that other people have hidden. Valuable things. This time, though, you're one of the good guys. The lady of the house has actually employed you to search the house, there to hunt out twelve missing jewels hidden by the deranged previous owner of the mansion.

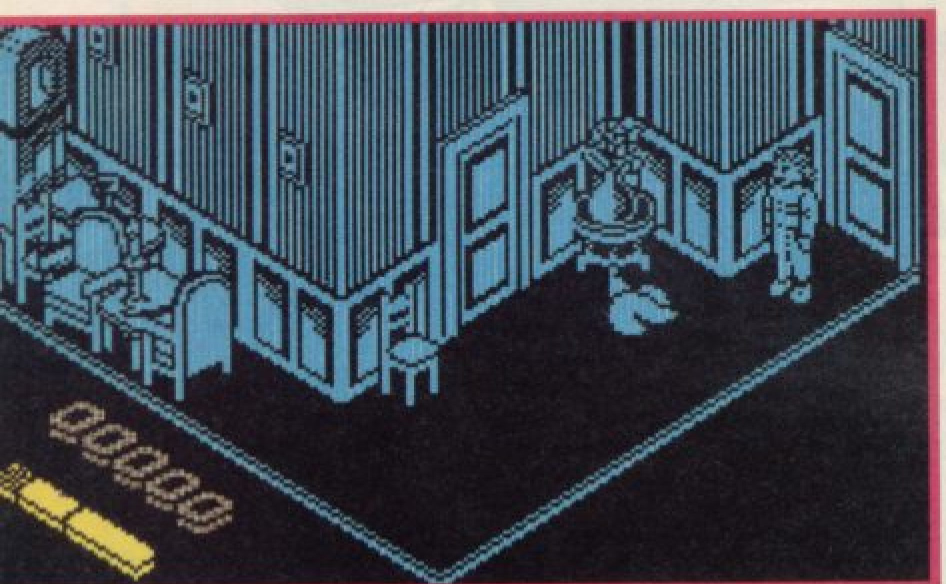
Still with me? Anyway the jewel hider was a mad inventor (some surprise!) and the result of his bizarre experiments provide the principle obstacles in the game. Not bats and vampires in this family ruin but giant canaries and massively enlarged household pets. You may be surprised just how intimidating a canary can be . . .

Actually the plot is pretty much your standard looky-collecty stuff but here is the awesome bit: virtually everything can be moved and virtually everything has an authentic weight and momentum. You can push and pull tables around, move pictures – perhaps to reveal something behind? You can not only push the snooker table around – you can jump up on it and push the snooker balls down the holes!



This is the closest to a miniature world in a computer I've ever seen. In other games you would try something silly and it would fail. In **Inside Outing** you try something silly and it actually works!

Sometimes the problems are not dissimilar to **Knight Lore** or **Head Over Heels**. For example in one room the way out is made inaccessible by a great pile of furniture. The objective then is to move it all out of the way, the problem being a giant mutant canary which (presumably by its deadly pecks) drains your energy pronto. Attempting to tough it out just doesn't seem to work – your energy never lasts long enough. The solution must be to find something to distract or stun the canary with. But what?



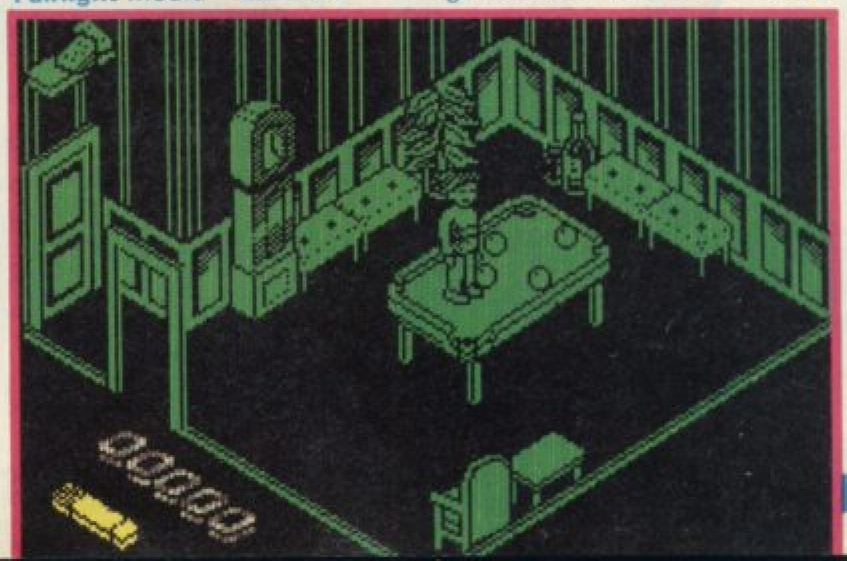
The use for the mysterious lumps of cheese was easier to guess – there are these giant rats you see . . .

Other problems are in the **Fairlight** mould – assorted objects just crying out for a use to be found for them or subtle combinations of objects which get you other objects which solve another problem . . .

The nearest point of comparison with **Inside Outing** is **Get Dexter** – a superb game which was just about the only game that ever made me wish I had an Amstrad. The virtues of both games are that they are very detailed, with stylish graphics and utterly ingenious puzzles.

You'll soon learn to search everywhere in this game – leave no picture unturned, no table unmoved.

Without a doubt the best 3D game since **Head Over Heels**■



ARCADE REVIEW

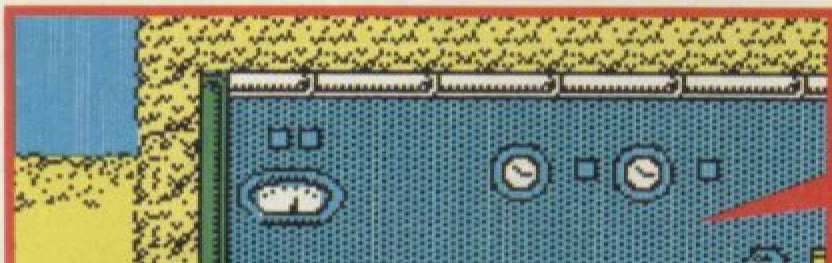




PROGRAMMERS
SEAN HOLLINGWORTH and **PETER HARRAP** have recently set up Teque Software Developments who, despite staggering under the weight of a useless name, are really quite talented.
SOFTOGRAPHY: **Potty Pigeon** (*Gremlin*, 1985), **Monty Mole** (*Gremlin*, 1985), **Monty on the Run** (*Gremlin*, 1986), Future Knight (*Gremlin*, 1987), **Trailblazer** (*Gremlin*, 1987), **Way of the Tiger** (*Gremlin*, 1987), **Bounder** (*Gremlin*, 1987), **Death Wish III** (*Gremlin*, 1987)

Oi remember a woile 'go, well, mus' be o'er twenny yeres now, me pal tol' me 'bout some mad feller called Professer Eyestrain or sommink. Any road, he claimed that some asteroid was gonner hit the Earth in twenny years time. Course, no one believed him. Oi only bring it up now, because some geezers have just come into the pub, talking about some asteroid going to pummel the planet. Bit of a coincidence, eh? I wonder what happened to the Prof, anyway . . . (excuse me Tony why have you started this review talking like John Riglar? . . . Ed).

Anyway turns out the prof was right, and you got to play one of 5 chosen adventurers who have to find him pronto. At the start of the game you are presented with 5 character Icons and must choose which one you wish to play. Each character is a well known national stereotype. For example, should you choose Herr Krusche, your little computerised figure will appear resplendant in full World War 1 German battle gear, complete with spiky helmet and big square chin. Other characters are done likewise, with the American dressed in wild west attire and the Chinese Wu Pong done up as a Japanese tourist, complete with camera. Ho Ho – on with the game.



CLASSIC

Your mission, chummy, is divided into 3 stages. First you parachute into an uncharted area of desert, infested with buzzards and snakes. The buzzards don't pose too much of a problem as they merely fly around overhead a lot, and occasionally eat you when you mistime a jump. The snakes, however, cause a great deal of sleepless nights. There are 2 sorts of snakes in this part of the desert. The completely deadly ones that sit on the ground in full view and jump at you when you go past, crushing you to death, and there are the completely deadly ones that hide in rocks and bite when you go past. Pretty nasty, eh? Still you are not completely defenceless. Various useful items are scattered about the place, such as vacuum cleaners that make you fly and flutes that can charm snakes. Once collected, they appear on a 'grid' of available objects. Now, this is clever, simply cycle through the items on the menu and select the one you want, and, get this, for the first time in gaming history, the item you choose actually makes a difference to the character shape. For example, if you select the flute, and your on-screen counterpart bounces around with a flute in his gob.

FACTS BOX

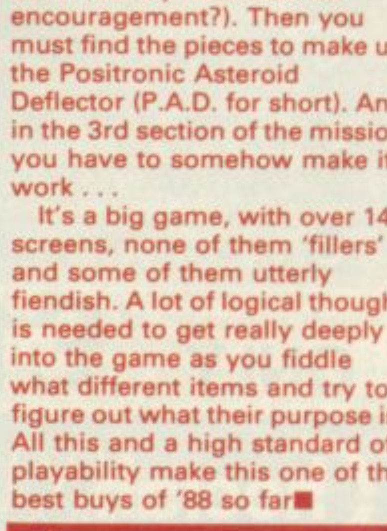
TERREMEX

10

I love the graphics of the game. The main character though small, is beautifully designed and superbly clear. The animation is the best cartoon quality I've seen. Watch when you try to get him to do something he doesn't want to do – he'll stop, look out at you and shake his head in the best *Moonlighting* tradition. The backdrops are amazing, with beatifully detailed deserts, caverns and heavenly clouds. Which brings me very nicely to the second stage of your mission.

After parachuting into the desert, you must find the Prof and convince him to save the earth (Surely he needs no encouragement?). Then you must find the pieces to make up the Positronic Asteroid Deflector (P.A.D. for short). And in the 3rd section of the mission you have to somehow make it work . . .

It's a big game, with over 140 screens, none of them 'fillers' and some of them utterly fiendish. A lot of logical thought is needed to get really deeply into the game as you fiddle what different items and try to figure out what their purpose is. All this and a high standard of playability make this one of the best buys of '88 so far■





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3D DOUBLE BILL

ARCADE Label: **Go It Alone** Author: **Martin and Derren White** Price: **£2.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **various** Reviewer: **Tony Dillon**

Two sub-standard filmation games, this game style has been done to death

On this latest offering from this little indie software house you get two terrible 3D games. In the first, you play Batteryman, who has to find a component and destroy it. In the second, you play an anarchist who has to destroy the world. Both terrible storylines.

The animation is weak, the controls are fiddly and rotational only. There is no score feature, very little sound and on both games, you only get one life. Both games are remarkably similar and are not worth the £1.49½ you pay for them, when you think what £1.99 *can* buy you■

★☆☆☆☆
★☆☆☆☆ **2**

PLAY IT AGAIN SAM

ADVENTURE Label: **Mastertronic** Price: **£1.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **Keyboard input** Reviewer: **Tony Dillon**

Enjoyable cheapie with good story and vocabulary. A worthwhile investment

OK bud, here's the lowdown on the lowlife. You are-a da Sam Spoon, PI. So, dere ya are, moping in yer office, when in walks dis dame who asks yer to find her sista. She leaves yer wid notin' but an envelope wid an address on it. So, what-a yer gonna do?

The rest is up to you in this offering from the Mastertronic adventure stable. It's certainly involving and moves along at quite a pace. Descriptions are long and detailed with even the smallest action like opening a drawer resulting in yet another long description! These are atmospheric and well complemented by the graphics that pop up occasionally . . . stills from dick movies. The parser is good, with a wide vocabulary, but can be frustrating. All togther, one of today's better budget adventures■

★★★★☆
★★★☆☆ **7**

TWILIGHT ZONE

GRID IRON

SIMULATION Label: **Top Ten** Author: **Sparklers** Price: **£1.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **None** Reviewer: **Tony Dillon**

Probably this is the world's first 'too easy' game and one definitely to leave on the shelf

Most sports games these days are managerial type games in which you must pick your brain and make crucial decisions that could be vital to your team's future. This is not the case here.

Don't get me wrong. It *is* a managerial game, it's just that none of the decisions you make have the slightest effect on your team as they win every single match they get and then win the superbowl. I did this on my first go and was more than a little disheartened.

The game is displayed in the usual format, with nice menus and tables, but I laugh at the (and I quote) '3D match graphics'. What they boil down to is a few diagonal lines and little black and white stick figures.

Grid Iron was released as Touchdown USA on the Sparklers label and was greeted with a little less than enthusiasm then. What chance does it have now?■

★☆☆☆☆
★☆☆☆☆ **2**

PROGEN

WORK-OUT Label: **Gensoft** 70 Nelson Road, Ipswich IP4 4DT Author: **Alan Biggs** Price: **£7.50 (mail-order only)** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **none** Reviewer: **Chris Jenkins**

A good idea, poorly executed. This genealogy program could be called relatively disappointing

Tracing your ancestors may be a fascinating hobby, but I don't see that Progen has much to add to it. Progen allows you to record the family relationships of up to thirty people from five generations, using a tree diagram. Details of names, place of birth and so on are then entered on to "family group sheets" which can be printed out.

The big problem is that to expand the number of people covered you have to save lot of different files using different *Root* names. This makes the business so tedious that I can't help thinking you'd be better off with a WH Smiths notepad in the first place. ■

★★★☆☆
★★☆☆☆ **5**

AXE

ADVENTURE Label: **Top Ten** Author: **Darryl Still/Dave Baines** Price: **£2.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **none** Reviewer: **Chris Jenkins**

Unimpressive text/graphics adventure which comes complete with a completely appalling novel

In the days before the sinking of the land of Thog, the Warlords of Castle Ploon rode forth into the Swamplands of Glark in search of the Lost Firelighter of the Elven Kings. (See, anyone can write this kind of rubbish).

AXE is a strange adventure with lousy graphics and a mixed command system. It prompts you either for one-letter commands such as *A(pproach), K(ill)* or *N(orth)*, or at certain stages for complete sentences. Whichever you choose, the graphics are minimal, extremely slowly drawn, and the program is remarkably prone to misleading statements of the "Mirriam is here – talk to Mirriam – you can't, there's nobody here" variety.

The accompanying paperback is full of the kind of writing where people talk in CAPITAL LETTERS to make themselves heard over the noise of Tolkien spinning in his grave. There's also, if you can believe it, a soundtrack tape available. From the demo on Side B of the program tape, it sounds like middle-period *Clannad* on tranquillisers, and the narrator like a refugee from the Northern club circuit ("Eeh up! Welcoom to t'world o' Carthelion!")

In case you haven't gathered, I didn't think much of it – but who Axed me?■

★★☆☆☆
★★☆☆☆ **4**

MURPHY

ARCADE Label: **Pirate** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **various** Price: **£2.99** Reviewer: **Tony Dillon**

Tedious bouncing game that might have looked good a few years ago. Then again, it might not

As you may have guessed from the title, this game is about a little chappy called Murphy who has himself a turbo charged road digger so that he can bounce around.

Controls are simple, with left-right controlling his position across the screen and up-down controlling the height of his jumps. The game has two speed settings, though for some reason I found the slow setting is harder!

Not much more to be said really. Except it's rubbish, there is very little animation, sprite detection is bad and doesn't it remind you of Kosmic Kanga?■

★★☆☆☆
★☆☆☆☆ **3**

WORDMASTER

WORK-OUT Label: **Cardex** 11 Marsh Street, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria LA14 2AE Author: **P Sneesby** Price: **£14.95 (cassette)/£16.50 (Microdrive) (mail-order only)** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **none** Reviewer: **Chris Jenkins**

Well worth seeking out if you need a word processor with some graphics functions

WordMaster is a pretty ambitious program. It uses a 64-column text display, and can hold in memory several short documents at once, up to a total of over 29,000 characters.

WordMaster has all the text functions you could hope for: *Insert, Delete, Margins, Block Copy, Underline, Search and Replace, Headers, Footers, Page Numbering* and so on. Fucntions are controlled both by a screen menu and in-text control characters. Unusual features include seven user-definable characters, and graphics handling. Graphics can be cut out of pictures saved as screen strings, incorporated into the text, and printed out in mono or with shading representing colours.

WordMaster will work with Centronics or RS-232 printers, though not every printer will work with all the graphics facilities.

The package is well worth seeking out if for any reason you find you don't get on with the more established word processing programs■

★★★★☆
★★★★☆ **8**

PASCAL COMPILER

UTILITY Label: **Mira** 24 Home Close, Kibworth, Leicestershire LE8 0JT Author: **S. Lee** Price: **£15 (mail-order only)** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **none** Reviewer: **Chris Jenkins**

A good opportunity to explore an important programming language at a bargain price

Mira's compiler produces free-standing machine code programs which are considerably faster than their Basic equivalents. The compiler can be transferred to Microdrive, and files can be saved to tape or Microdrive.

Several demonstration programs, such as graph plotter and spelling checker are included, but while the small photocopied manual is entirely adequate it doesn't actually teach you Pascal. For that you'll need a good textbook■

★★★★☆
★★★☆☆ **7**

BLITZKRIEG

STRATEGY SIMULATION REVIEW

Now you have the chance to refight the campaign which led to the Fall of France in **Blitzkrieg** – a wargame based on the German invasion of Holland. You too can crush defenceless neutral nations beneath your jack-boot heel. Nice to be the bad guys for a change! **Blitzkrieg** is simple to play. On screen, you get a map of the Benelux countries and north-eastern France, with cities, rough terrain and forests marked on it.

Also on screen are various different unit icons, arranged according to what army they belong to. Icons reveal where Allied troops are at the beginning of the game, but on the first turn they will disappear from the screen not to appear again until your troops are within a certain distance. This limited intelligence system is supposed to recreate your uncertain intelligence reports, and it can be a right pain to think you have a clear road to the coast ahead of you and then run into the Belgians.

Movement is also pretty straightforward. You order your forces by army: and instead of specifying a particular destination for each unit in the army, you just tell the computer where the left flank, centre and right flank should end up. This is far more realistic than most computer strategy games: in real life, an army is given a 'line of advance' it should follow, and the positioning of flanking forces is particularly important.

Once a unit has been given a position it has to keep in relation to the army's centre. This leads to some rather odd routes being taken from time to time.

Below the map window, there is an instruction window which tells you what options you have at that moment. Pick one of five armies, then move the centre arrow to the target you want, set left and right flanks, and say whether they should attack whatever's in their path, defend or use their initiative. Do that for five armies and that's the game. Exit, watch the combat calculations, scream in fury as the French duff up your favourite panzer corps, then start again.

When combat takes place, the units fighting flash in turn and a number indicates how much damage each has taken.

One of the more inventive strategy games and a rare chance to play the bad guys!■

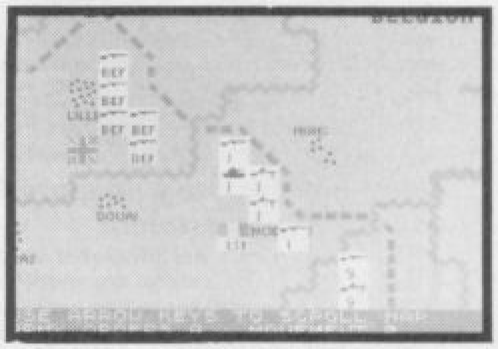
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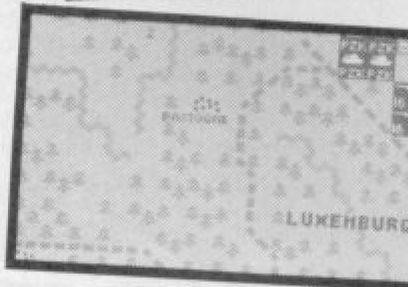
Achtung, Britischer sweinhund! Neat strategy game that lets you crush democracy – try it for Christmas

BLITZKRIEG
Label: CCS
Author: in-house
Price: £9.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

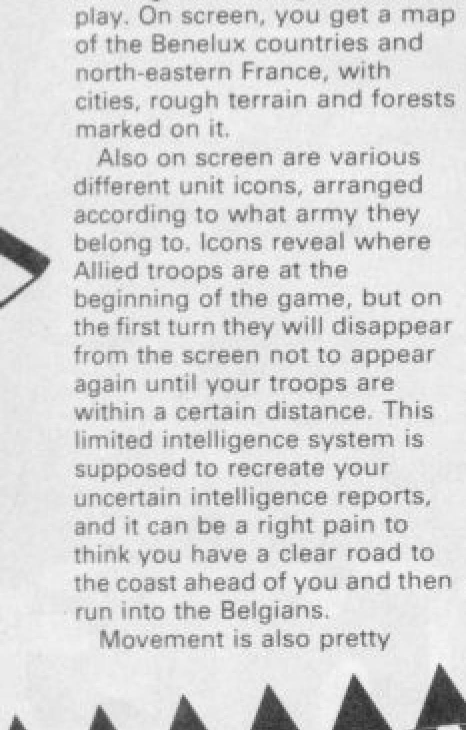
Reviewer: Gary Rook

★★★★☆
★★★★☆ 8





PEGASUS BRIDGE



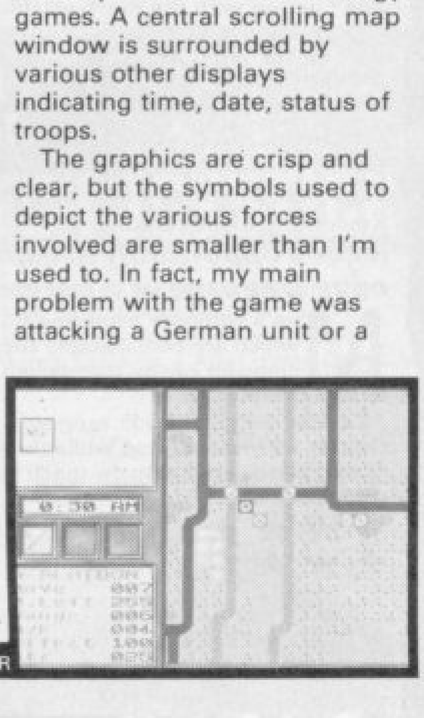
Pegasus Bridge is a well designed and provoking game which looks capable of providing earnest strategists with a consistent challenge.

It concentrates on one particular target, a bridge over the Caen canal which saw some heroic and heavy fighting between the German and British troops. Taken by glider borne forces at the start of D-Day, they managed to hold on to it in the face of heavy enemy pressure until eventually relieved. After the war was over, the bridge was officially renamed **Pegasus Bridge,** after the winged horse used as a unit symbol by the British forces.

You get quite a bit of choice with this one, as you can elect to command either the British or the Germans, with the computer commanding whoever you don't want. Alternatively, you can two player with (obviously) one person commanding each side.

The game follows what is by now a fairly familiar format, used by most if not all strategy games. A central scrolling map window is surrounded by various other displays indicating time, date, status of troops.

The graphics are crisp and clear, but the symbols used to depict the various forces involved are smaller than I'm used to. In fact, my main problem with the game was attacking a German unit or a speck on the screen.



At the start of the game, assuming that you choose to play the British against a computer-controlled German army as I did, you get to choose where your gliders are going to land. Do this carefully – remember the main objective is to capture and hold Pegasus Bridge.

Also remember that just because you want a glider to land in a particular spot doesn't mean that it necessarily will. High winds may bring it down well away from your chosen target!

Once down, moving troops is easy enough – you just indicate a target point by moving the on-screen cursor there and hit *Fire*.

The cursor is also used to tell your units which enemy forces to attack. Move the cursor on to the target, hit *Fire* etc. You have a number of different attack options; you can just wade in and beat someone over the head with your rifles, or you can use ranged fire from your artillery; the Allies also have access to naval gunfire support from the fleet of warships steaming around off-shore, and air power.

There's not really much more that needs to be said. **Pegasus Bridge** is an entertaining strategy game, whcih is in general (pun – geddit?) well thought out and programmed.

My main complaint is the relatively small size of the map window and of the units which are depicted on it. I have a lot of difficulty seeing them – maybe I need new glasses■

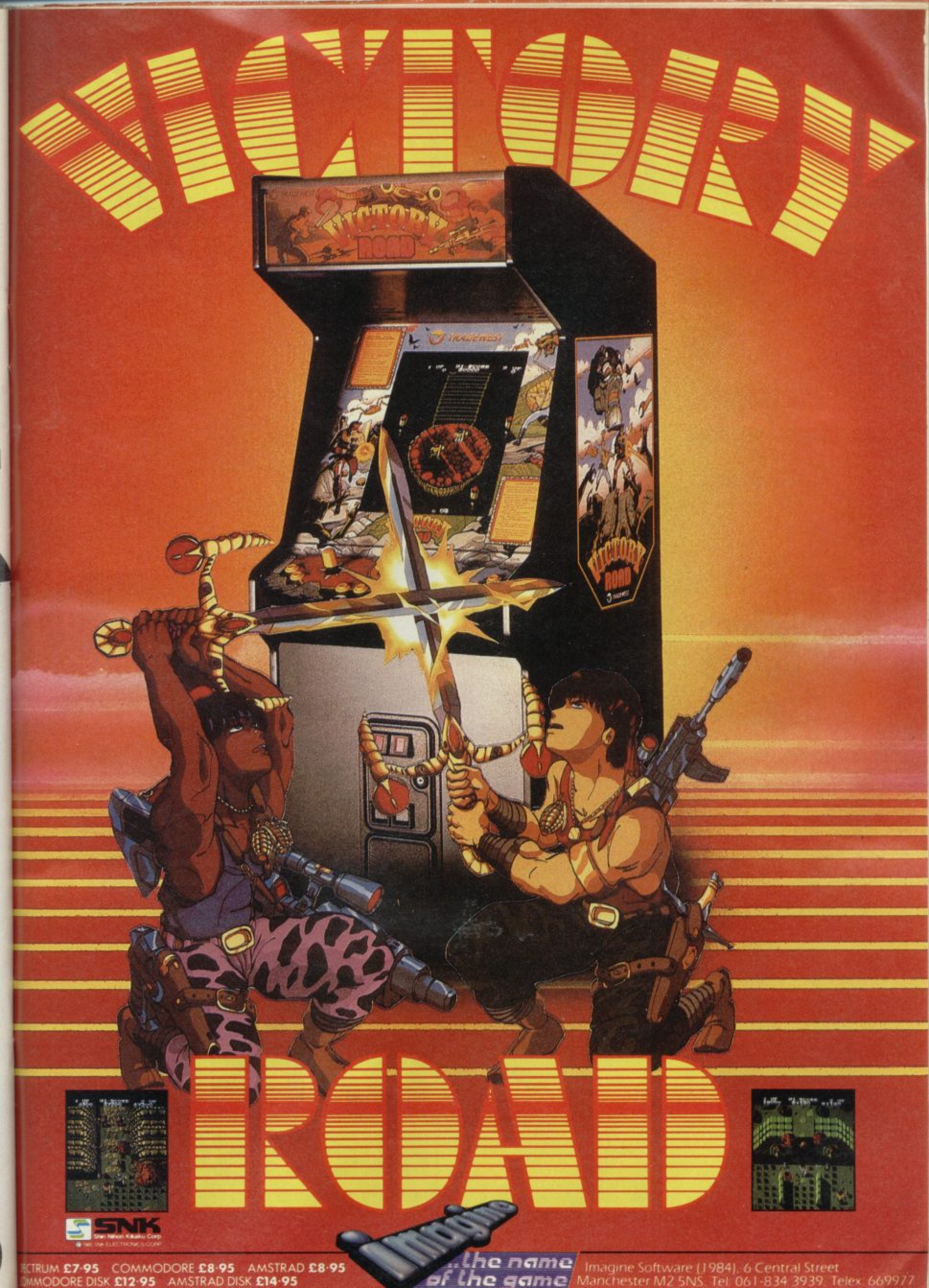
FACTS BOX

Well designed, no non-sense wargame covering an interesting part of the D-Day operations. A little unexciting though

PEGASUS BRIDGE
Label: PSS
Author: In-house
Price: £12.95 (£17.95 disc)
Memory: 48K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Gary Rook

★★★★☆
★★★☆☆ 7


VICTORY
ROAD
SNK
Shin Nihon Kikaku Corp
Imagine
...the name of the game
ECTRUM £7·95 COMMODORE £8·95 AMSTRAD £8·95
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Imagine Software (1984), 6 Central Street
Manchester M2 5NS. Tel: 061-834 3939. Telex: 669977

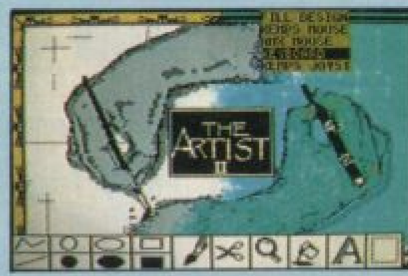
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- Now a top quality mouse system at a realistic price.
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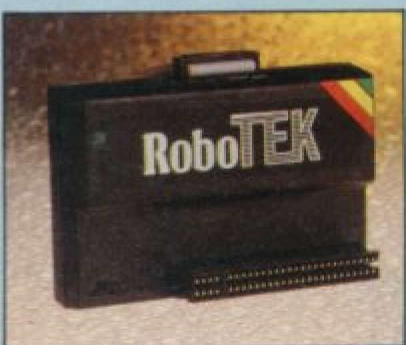


ARTIST II ILLUSTRATOR

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- Windows icon driven.
- Font and sprite designer.
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- Flexible cut & paste.
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Special Offer — Buy Artist II & Genius Mouse system for only £49.99 POST FREE!

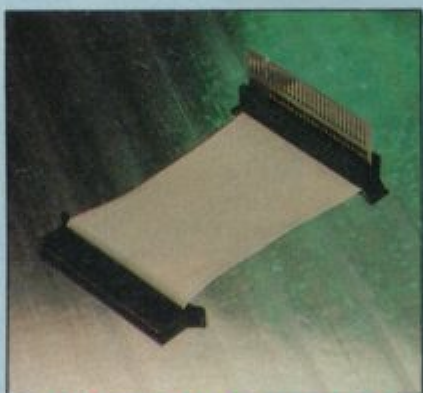
State 48K or 128K version of software required.



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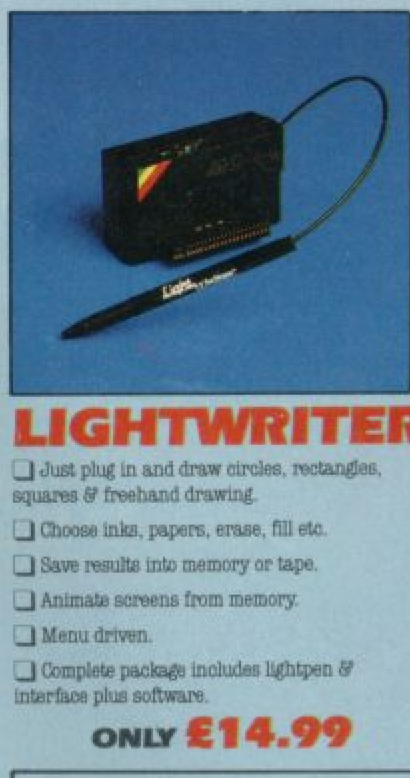
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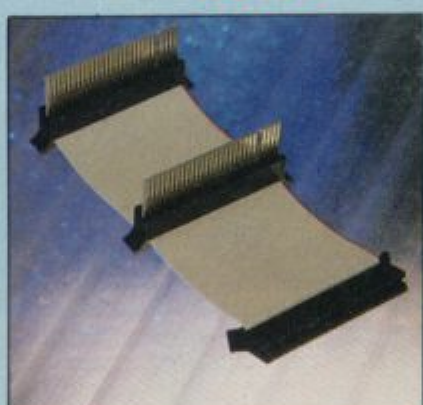
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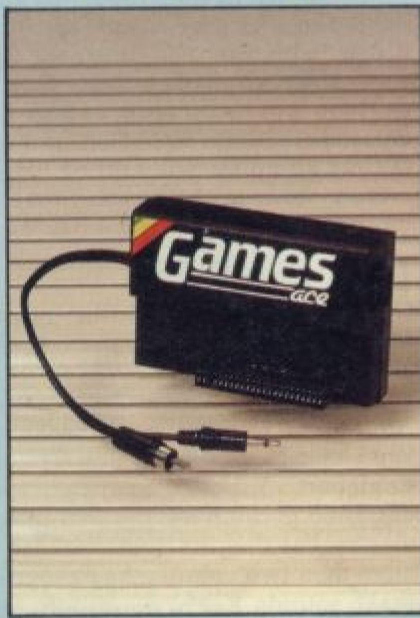
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- Accepts any 9 pin joystick for maximum compatibility (Kempston system).
- Plus – delivers sound from games through TV speaker (fully controllable).

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or complete with Quickshot Turbo
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19
PREDICT
PERSO



He's rough, he's mean, he's a killing machine, he takes junior asprin – this is Timmy Termite. The big film of '88 Termiteator tells how heroic dwarf Timmy burrows his way into Vietnam to rescue his buddies left behind . . .

In case you hadn't noticed, we're staring into the cavernous throat of next year.

1988, the year in which George Orwell predicted that we would be under the control of a merciless dictatorship of cocker spaniels (in a little-known novel written just after *1984*, and just before his doctor suggested a nice long holiday).

But, being the well-informed and knowledgeable bunch we are, we at SU can make at least *three* infallible predictions for 1988.

- There will be an issue of SU almost every month.
- Oysters will be in season in months with an R.
- Noel Edmonds will still be nauseating, but in a new show.

Over now to our entrail-reading department for a quick sift through the innards of the nearest goat.

JANUARY

Hundreds of unwanted Christmas presents returned to the shops. Many of them are faulty micros. Shop assistants claim 'it's meant to give off blue smoke when you plug it in'. Many more are perfectly healthy gloves, handkerchiefs, socks and Filofax holsters which your Aunt Maud thought would make such a nice present . . . and so did you Uncle Jim, Cousin Jules, Grannie Agatha, Great-Uncle Englebert A sudden on-rush of really naff software, designed to catch out the first-time buyers before they realise that the Spectrum can cope with more than two colours, has a joystick port, can make sounds **Fad of the month:** *Shaving off all your hair and going around saying "how's that for a head cold?"*

FEBRUARY

No news of **Star Trek** on the Spectrum. A spokesman confidently predicts that 'work will definitely start this decade'. Michael 'I'm Mad' Jackson donates his noses to science. Science says it doesn't want them. Bob Holness' *Blockbusters* adopted as the official national game of Chatanooga. US Gold releases **Olympic Dwarf Throwing**, the last remaining sport not converted to home computers. One computer magazine describes it as 'certainly the greatest achievement of Western civilization' while another calls it 'just another in a long line of dwarf-throwing games'.

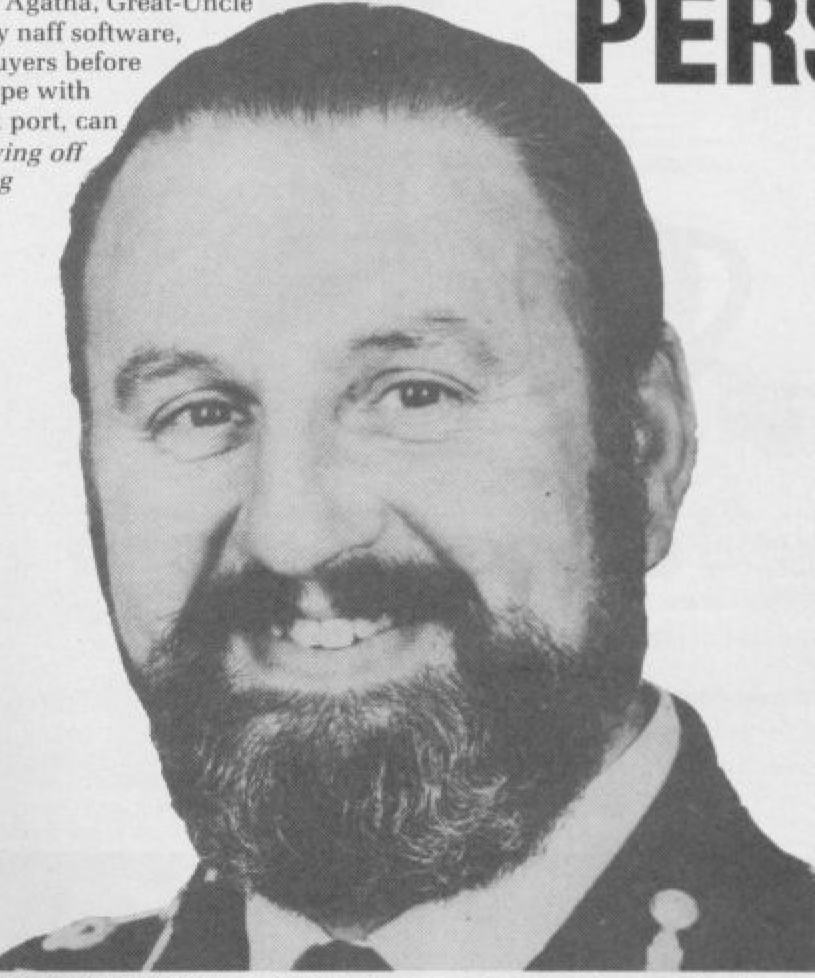
Fad of the month: *Skateboards are back! No they're not, it was a joke. In fact flared trousers are back. Everyone dig out your older brother's loon pants, and practice jumping off buildings and floating to the ground* (Don't try this at home – folks)

MARCH

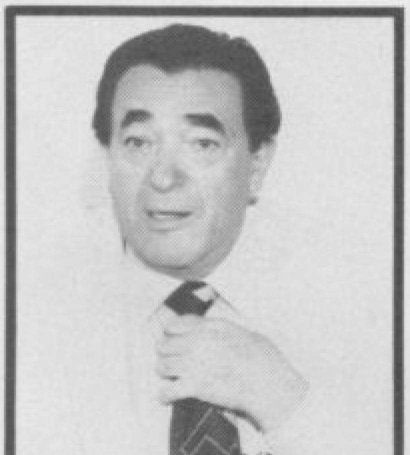
Macdonald's announces its sponsorship of the football league. All players now have to take to the pitch in frizzy wigs and size 23 boots. Scores rocket, but crowd violence becomes intolerable as the pitch is showered with those horrible slices of gherkin that no-one ever eats. In response to public demand, Damon returns to *Brookside.* The last three months' episodes are explained away as 'a dream'. Sheila Grant is kidnapped by UFOs.

In an attempt to make the Amiga more popular, Commodore offers a Spectrum compatibility up-grade, by which the 68000, sound chip, graphics chip, and most of the memory chips are taken out by skilled engineers.

Fad of the month: *Painting your nose green for no good reason whatsoever*



James Anderton, always a popular figure, causes yet another storm in December by claiming that software pirates should be electrocuted using steel wires connected to Spectrum power supplies. "I'd waggle the interface myself" he claims



Bob Maxwell, ever in the news, causes a sensation early in the year by trying to buy every single Football team in the first division "Conflict of interest? No way!" said the cheery multimilloinaire socialist

APRIL

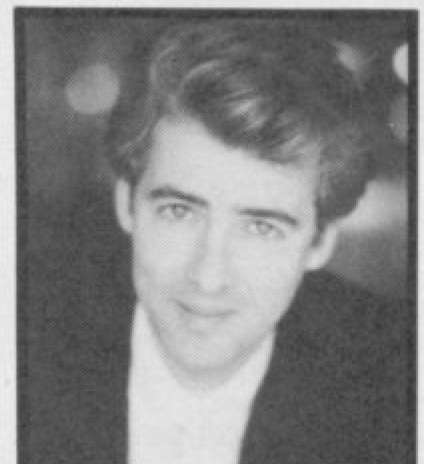
Amstrad announces a Spectrum-compatible home computer with 4096 colours, dual 68000 processors, 256-oscillator sound chip, two built-in 3.5 inch disc drives and a free 24-pin dot-matrix printer – all for £49.95. The announcement goes out on April 1st and everyone assumes it's a joke, so the whole plan is scrapped. Richard Branson travels across the Atlantic from Liverpool to Miami – on foot. Still no sign of **Star Trek** on the Spectrum.

Fad of the month: *Home computer conversions of classics of Russian literature such as* Anna Karenina *('dodge the Bolsheviks as the train hurtles towards you')* and War and Peace *('dodge the trains as the Bolsheviks hurtle towards you'). Each game has to be loaded off tape in a hundred and ninety-seven parts*

MAY

Domark releases the home computer version of Woody Allen's *Annie Hall.* Go to art galleries to bump up you Intellectualometer, visit the psychiatrist to bring your Neuroticism Rating down, run away from girls and collect bagels. Digitised jazz music. Next in the series: Luis Bunuel's *Obscure Object of Desire* in the form of platforms and ladders game. Sir Clive Sinclair launches the smallest ever computer. So small that it can fit in your nostril, the Noseman Z80 comes complete with word-processing, business graphics and accounts software. Operating it in public proves to be something of an embarrassment, and the optional joystick even more so.

Fad of the month: *Going into any branch of The Sock Shop and asking "Do you sell socks?"*



***Whatever happened to Jonathan Ross? The chat show idol of 1987 has his show axed – it is replaced by reruns of** The Getalong Gang*

88

IONS &

NALITIES

JUNE

The nadir (look that one up if necessary) of the software year. Assuming that everyone is out burning up the streets on their skateboards, playing Catch the Shuriken or having a jolly super swim in the pollution infested North Sea, the software houses pack up and jet off to Barbados for the month. Meanwhile, the kids are sitting in darkened rooms twitching nervously and moaning 'Software! software! If only I could get some new software!' **Star Trek** on the Spectrum gnaws through the bars of its cage and escapes, but fortunately it is recaptured before anyone has a chance to buy a copy.
Fad of the month: *Calling everything 'motorbike'. "That was a completely motorbike goal from the plucky little left-winger, Barry." "Have you seen the new Bob Holness movie, it's utterly motorbike." "What an absolutely motorbike motorbike, Wayne."*



Sheila Wrigglesworth from Slough becomes, in July, a big pop star when her big hit Hip Hop Summer Holiday *– she is outraged at suggestions that she is a mere Madonna clone*

JULY

Alan Sugar knighted in Birthday Honours List. The Beatles hand back their MBEs. The Editor goes on holiday – SU comes out two weeks early. Sylvester McCoy mysteriously vanishes, and a new *Doctor Who* is announced: he's Noel Edmonds. Samantha Fox is to play his two assistants.
Fad of the month: *Games based on food:* ***Basil the Great Mouse Detective, Jack the Kipper, Hunt for Bread October****, and, inevitably,* ***Chundercats.***



The Minister of Educaiton demonstrates his latest plan for dealing with problem children – special Government punishment podules – "it's for their own good" he says

AUGUST

Reports that **Star Trek** has been sighted in Macclesfield dismissed as 'mass hallucination'. Andrew Wright rejoins Activision – again. Release of the **Film Tie-In Construction Kit** – includes a facsimile cheque-book, a very bad platforms-and-ladders game, and a series of stickers showing the heads of Sylvester Stallone, Charles Bronson and Arnold Schwarzenegger, which you can stick on the box.
Fad of the month: *Bob Holness articulated dolls. Come complete with lectern, light-up scoreboard and cue cards.*

SEPTEMBER

The PCW Show, and another chance to see all the videos of games that aren't finished, and probably never will be. Anita Sinclair, the Diana Rigg of the software industry, releases another twelve adventures, all of which win an award, and none of which are ever completed by any human being. Ocean annouces its Christmas titles: **Blood Death Zombie Apocalypse, Massacre Destruction Megadeath Commandos, Brain-dead Flesheating Mutants,** and **Fluffy Bunnies (Bite Out Your Brains).** Film tie-ins, the lot of them.
Fad of the month: *Going down to the shops to look for* ***Star Trek*** *on the Spectrum, then going home again.*

OCTOBER

First Santa Claus sighted in Debenhams, Hartlepool. BBC televises *Pro-Celebrity Shove-Ha'penny,* hosted by Paul Daniels and Terry Wogan. US Gold snaps up the home computer rights against fierce competition from Kraäpsoft SA, Dusseldorf. Adverts appear for a Commodore Amiga Emulator for the Spectrum appear in all the computer magazines. Hundreds of punters send off £19.95 and receive a sticker saying 'This is a Commodore Amiga', and instructions on where to stick it.
Fad of the month: *Tying your shoelaces* under *your shoes.*



Jeffrey Archer seeks to complete his rise and rise by developing a music career. He appears on Top of the Pops singing My Way. *Domark do a game based on the record. Both flop*

NOVEMBER

SU's own Tamara Howard wins the Miss World contest, says her ambitions are to work with children and travel the world. Judith Chalmers tactfully keeps her mouth shut. Arguments over sales figures between budget software houses finally come to head in a bloody gun-battle in a Kensington wine-bar. Two weeks later Firebird, Mastertronic and Codemasters all release versions of **Winebar Shoot-'em-up'.**
Fad of the month: *Boiled potatoes with jelly.*

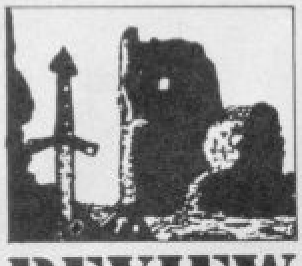
DECEMBER

Rash of Christmas records from fading celebrities such as Lennie Bennett, Lulu, Cannon and Ball and Bob Holness. Hip-hop is out, waltz time is in. Spinning on your head is replaced by dancing around your handbag. Faulty Spectrums, returned to Dixon's in Janaury, finally replaced. Now emitting *green* smoke. Ocean is undertandably smug as **Fluffy Bunnies (Bite Out Your Brains)** tops the software charts. Plans for eight sequels are announced. Release of the Spectrum Plus 4: decent keyboard, built-in disc drive, 128K memory, improved sound chip, two joystick ports and all that. The big new gimmick – an on/off switch, causes riots as frenzied punters snap up stocks the instant they hit the shops. Still no sign of **Star Trek.** Firebird announces home computer version of **Fireball XL5** instead.
Fad of the month: *Writing a load of nonsense about 1989 and publishing it in computer magazine*■
"Mad Jack" McMad



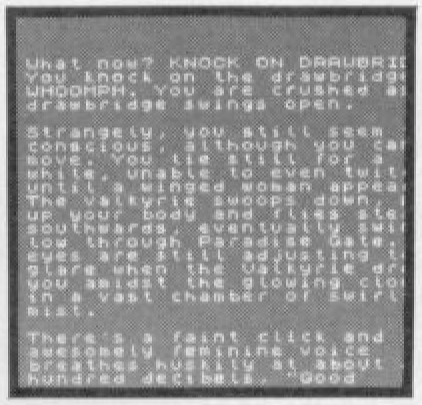
Macsen the legendary software house, reforms and immediately gets the much valued licence to famous TV show The Price is Right. *The game gets zero stars "so completely awful mere words are not enough" says the review in SU. Macsen go broke again*

ADVENTURE



REVIEW

KNIGHT ORC



FACTS BOX

Text-only adventure with informative descriptions, multitude of characters, large vocabulary and it's very, very funny

KNIGHT ORC
Label: Rainbird
Author: Austin Bros, John Jones Steele
Price: £14.95 (£19.95 disc)
Memory: 48K/128K (enhanced)

Reviewer: Tony Dillon

★★★★★★★★★★ 10

A Level 9 adventure is always a delight to play, so it was with glee that I loaded the first part of **Knight Orc**.

I say the first part because **KO** is big. Not just big, but very big.

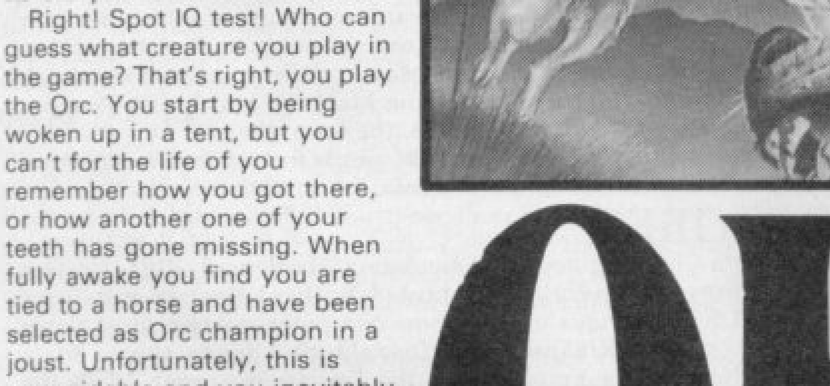
Held on three cassettes no less, each containing a full 128K load on one side and a 48K cut-down version of the same program on the other.

Like most adventures of this sort you have to finish one part before you can start the next.

Right! Spot IQ test! Who can guess what creature you play in the game? That's right, you play the Orc. You start by being woken up in a tent, but you can't for the life of you remember how you got there, or how another one of your teeth has gone missing. When fully awake you find you are tied to a horse and have been selected as Orc champion in a joust. Unfortunately, this is unavoidable and you inevitably lose to the human champion. You are then taken for dead and are thrown away 'with all the other rubbish'. And, the rest, as they say, is history.

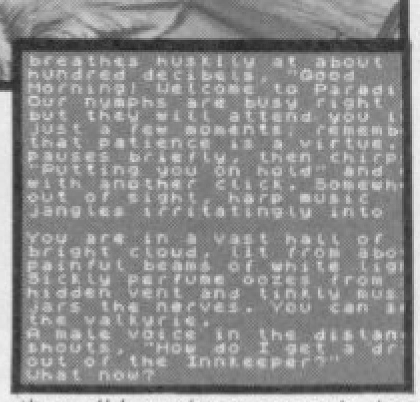
Knight Orc is no ordinary adventure. Oh no, this is a multi-user adventure, in the genre of **Mud,** only the other players are simulated. One nice touch is the little bits that are added on the end of descriptions which tell you what the other players are doing such as 'Somewhere, a male voice cries out "Has anyone got any spare treasure".' A lot of the time what they say actually bears some reference to where you are.





What other wonderful things can I tell you about? The location descriptions are exquisite and more than make up for the absence of graphics. For the most part, they are very long, sometimes taking more than a screen and are very informative telling you graphically what you can see and where exactly you are. The humour worked into the text is like something out of a Douglas Adams novel, quick-fire and very enjoyable. Never droll. For instance, when you enter the pub in Part 1, the description is of a typical country inn, but it's also a clever parody of all the long descriptions in such books as *Lord of the Rings* or *Hobbit.* Also, the changes that have been made from human culture to the culture of the little folk is surprisingly laughable, with such mentions as 'Hobbit and Westron Music' in the inn and so on.

But the high spot of the game is the interactive characters. With such original names as Genghis and the Phantom of the Opera. All have their own character and their own goal to complete. And, the one thing



they all have in common is that they all hate Orcs. Every time they meet you, they either give you a dirty look, steal from you or fight you, all stating such comments as 'Ugh, a vile Orc' or 'I'm stealing from a vile Orc', and for some reason, once they see you, they all want to follow you. Odd, but you can follow them. Yes *Follow* is just one of the multitude of extra commands alloted, which include the now almost standard *Ram Save* and *Ram Load,* plus commands like *Find* object, which will take you to the location of the object you want, if it exists, and then there's *Go To Location,* which takes you to wherever you want to go via the quickest route.

All these add up to make it one of the best adventures I have played. Technically **The Pawn** may be superior, but in plot, enjoyment and atmosphere **Knight Orc** wins hands down■



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3d
The story so far . . .
The Mekon has returned, cunning as ever, to take revenge on the Planet Earth. In this bid to become ruler of earth the Mekon has developed a new genetically engineered race . . . the SUPERTREENS!
To save the earth someone must destroy the Mekon space ship before the Supertreens can be launched. There is only one way to defeat the Mekon – face to face. There is only one man for this mission . . . DAN DARE!
DAN DARE II
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TRY STOPPING HIS SUBSCRIPTION TO SINCLAIR USER

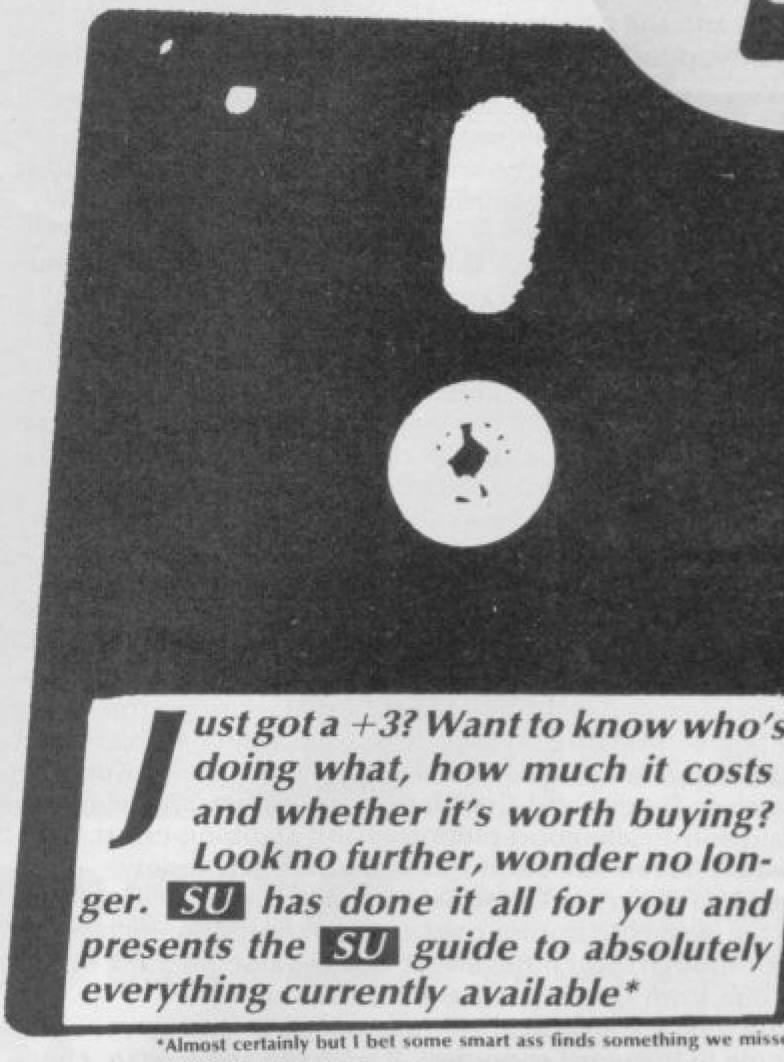
Kamikazi Bear isn't just a Manic Alien Killer, he's also an avid reader of Sinclair User. SU gives him all the latest gen on how to blast, kill or destroy the enemies in all the best Spectrum Games. And because this bear wants to get the reviews before any of his mates he's taken out a subscription to Sinclair User.What you can get from Sinclair User,apart from pages and pages of reviews and screen shots,are lots of pokes, hints and tips, Mega-competitions, brilliant free gifts and all the hottest news - before any of your mates do!! So don't mess about, fill the form in today and get SU every month delivered to your door. If you don't, we may have to send the bears round!



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*Just got a +3? Want to know who's doing what, how much it costs and whether it's worth buying? Look no further, wonder no longer. SU has done it all for you and presents the SU guide to absolutely everything currently available**

*Almost certainly but I bet some smart ass finds something we missed.

Digital Integration has the helicopter simulation **Tomahawk** on disc; it's good, but we're disappointed to hear that there are not firm plans for further disc versions. **Tomahawk** is £12.95.

Electronic Arts has nothing right now, but plans to bring out **The Bard's Tale,** a complex graphic role-playing game, and **The Archon Collection,** a set of chess-like strategy games, at £14.95. They're due in February; we can't wait.

Firebird is releasing some big hits on disc; **Sentinel,** the baffling multi-thousand-level strategy game, and cutesy arcade game **Bubble Bobble** for a start. Both will be £12.95; the question of compilations of budget games on disc encouraged a definite "maybe".

Gremlin Graphics deserves a huge great cheer for fearlessly declaring no fewer than **TEN** titles for the +3. **Basil the Great Mouse Detective** (amusing cartoon-style arcade), **Coconut Capers – Jack the Nipper Two** (action-packed jungle romp), **Gary Lineker's Football** (simulation), **Masters of the Univers** (film spin-off arcade adventure) and all future Spectrum product, including **Alternative World Games** (zany sports compilation), **Deflektor** (laser-juggling test of skill), **Tour de Force** (crungey bike racing sim), **Blood Valley** (adventure), **Venom Strikes Back** (arcade adventure sequel to **MASK),** and **North Star** (graphic adventure). All £14.99, so start saving the pocket money now.

Incentive has **Driller** fabbo-complex 3D game out at £17.95 and say that every new Spectrum will also come out on disc. Hooray!

Leisure Genius has three titles in the offing. **Scrabble Deluxe** is already on the boards; it's a faithful recreation of the family favourite, but with a built-in dictionary to stop those nasty little fights which always seem to break out when someone puts down SYZYGY on a triple word score. £15.95 for that, and the same for the forthcoming **Scruples,** the jolly game of lying and immorality. Also on the way is a disc version of **Action Force,** the excellent game of the comic cartoon of the little dollies.

Martech's wise idea is to re-release hits on disc; hence **Four Top Games.** Excellent-sounding package includes classic gorefest **Nemesis the Warlock,** Shoot-'em-up **Catch 23,** *200AD* tie-in **Slaine,** and zapper **Pulsator,** all for a dead reasonable £14.99. New titles on disc include **Nigel Mansell's Grand Prix,** a sophisticated racing simulator, and the popular **MegaApocalypse,** possibly the most brain-blasting shoot-'em-up ever, both at the same price.

Mastertronic's minions haven't been idle either. There are four compilations, each of three games, in the works, at a very reasonable £9.99 each. **Plus Three Arcade** includes excellent shoot-'em-up **Bosconian,** spacial shove-ha'penny simulation **Motos** (an SU Classic, no less), and hexagonal pool sim **Angleball. Plus Three Sports** includes **Bump Set Spike** (netball), **Strike** (bowling), and **Speedking 2** (motorbike racing). Also on the way are compilations **Plus Three Adventurer** and **Plus Three Biker.** The excitement, the excitement!!!

Microprose's ground-breaking assault helicopter simulator **Gunship** is flitting around at a reasonable £12.95; no futher plans at the moment, but you can bet the simulations specialists have something tucked under their jumpsuits.





Mirrorsoft

isn't beating around the bush; from now on, all new Spectrum games titles will automatically be released on disc too (hooray!). While it doesn't look as if many of the back-catalogue titles will make it onto disc, current ones such as motorbike racer, **Mean Streak, Andy Capp,** the game based on the lovable, cheeky, lazy git, and the astoundingly addictive if utterly simple geometric puzzle **Tetris,** will be the first to appear on disc.

Ocean

predictably, has already made a big impact on the +3 software market. When you buy the +3, you'll get a disc containing six Ocean games, none of which are absolutely contemptible. **Mailstrom** is an arcade adventure about a postman trying to deliver the mail despite fierce opposition from the local mutants. **Cosmic Wartoad** is a sporadically funny series of mini-arcade games, featuring a fearless reptilian warrior battling against horrible blobs. **Daley Thompson's Supertest** 1 and 2 are compilations of sporting simulations, both fair hits in their time. **Gift from the Gods** is an arcade adventure set in the days of Greek Myths (and mithters, we hope. Finally **NOMAD** is a spacey arcade adventure which is probably the dead bunny-rabbit of the bunch.

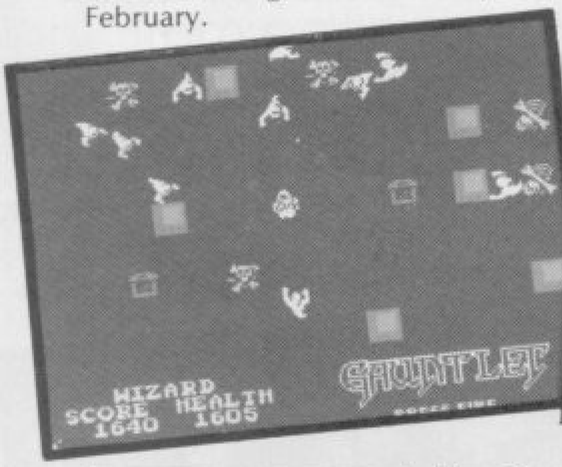
If you buy from Dixon's, you'll be privileged to receive another compilation of Ocean games on top of this (or at the side depending on how you carried the box home). **Green Beret** is the game that makes Rambo look like **Rupert;** non-stop shooting and stabbing. **Short Circuit,** boring game of the boring film; **Mutants,** incomprehensible space romp; **Great Escape,** the clever-but-complex 3D war epic; **Yie-Ar Kung-Fu,** more chop-fooey; and **Cobblers,** sorry **Cobra,** the not-actually-terrifically-good platforms-and-stabbing effort. On the whole, a fair selection but without much variety.

Even less variety in **Game Set and Match,** which is no fewer than ten games featuring over twenty sports simulations. At £17.95, though, you'll never get better value on your disc. Also due from Ocean are **Tai-Pan,** the oriental trading'n'piracy arcade adventure which gives a new meaning to the word springroll, **Renegade** and **Rastan**, chop-and-slash coin-op conversion, both at £14.95.

Rainbird

isn't slacking, with five disc titles planned. Ultimate vector-graphic shoot-'em-up **Starglider,** and devious Magnetic Scrolls adventure **The Pawn,** are already out at £15.95.

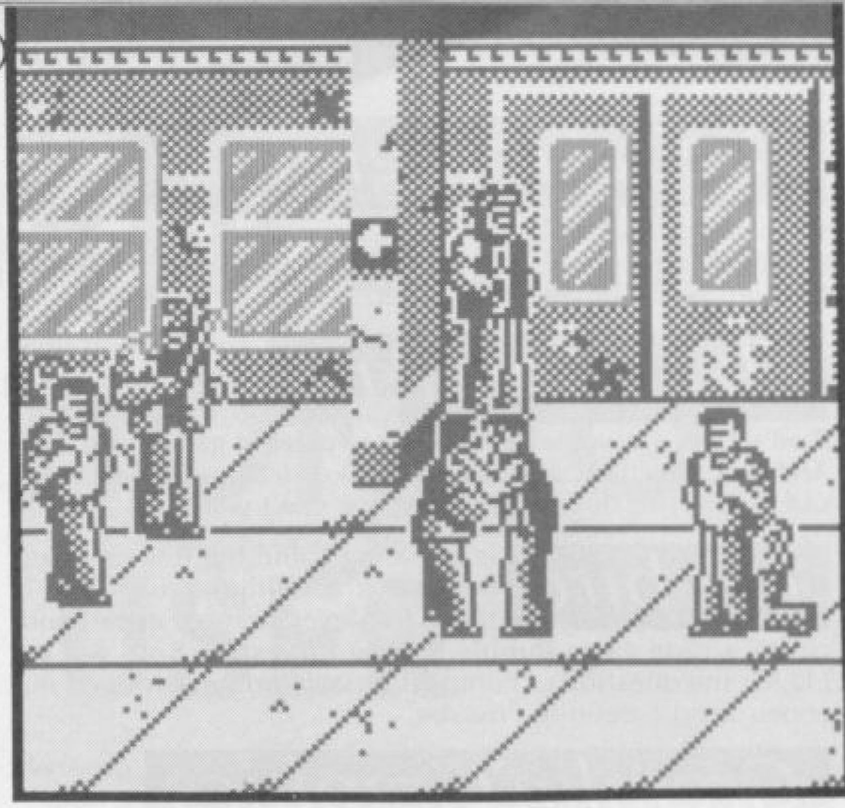
Forthcoming at the same cost are **Guild of Thieves** (more text adventuring from ice maiden Anita Sinclair), **Jinxter** (it's that woman again), and 3D epic **Carrier Command** in February.





Tasman

offers **Tasword Plus Three,** the latest incarnation of the popular word-processing program. It's a 128K program which allows 64K text files up to 10,000 words long. Apart from full disc management features, **Tasword** has data merge and mail merge facilities, on-screen help displays, twenty-five typefaces and all the usual page formatting, tabulating, search and replace, header, block copy and move facilities. At the moment, it's one of few bits of serious +3 packages, and at £19.95 looks like a good deal. Forthcoming is **Tas-Sign,** a notice- and banner-printing package, again at £19.95 on disc.

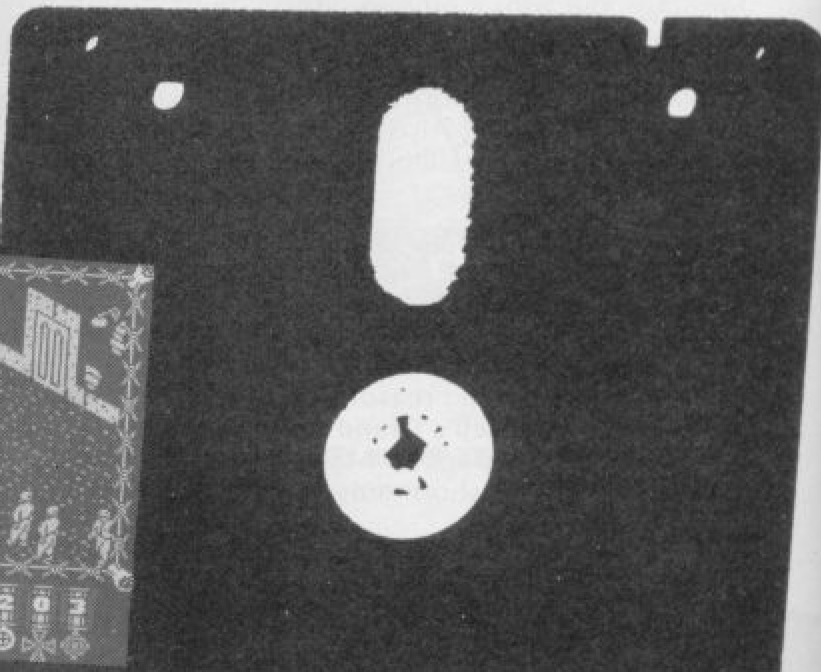


Trojan

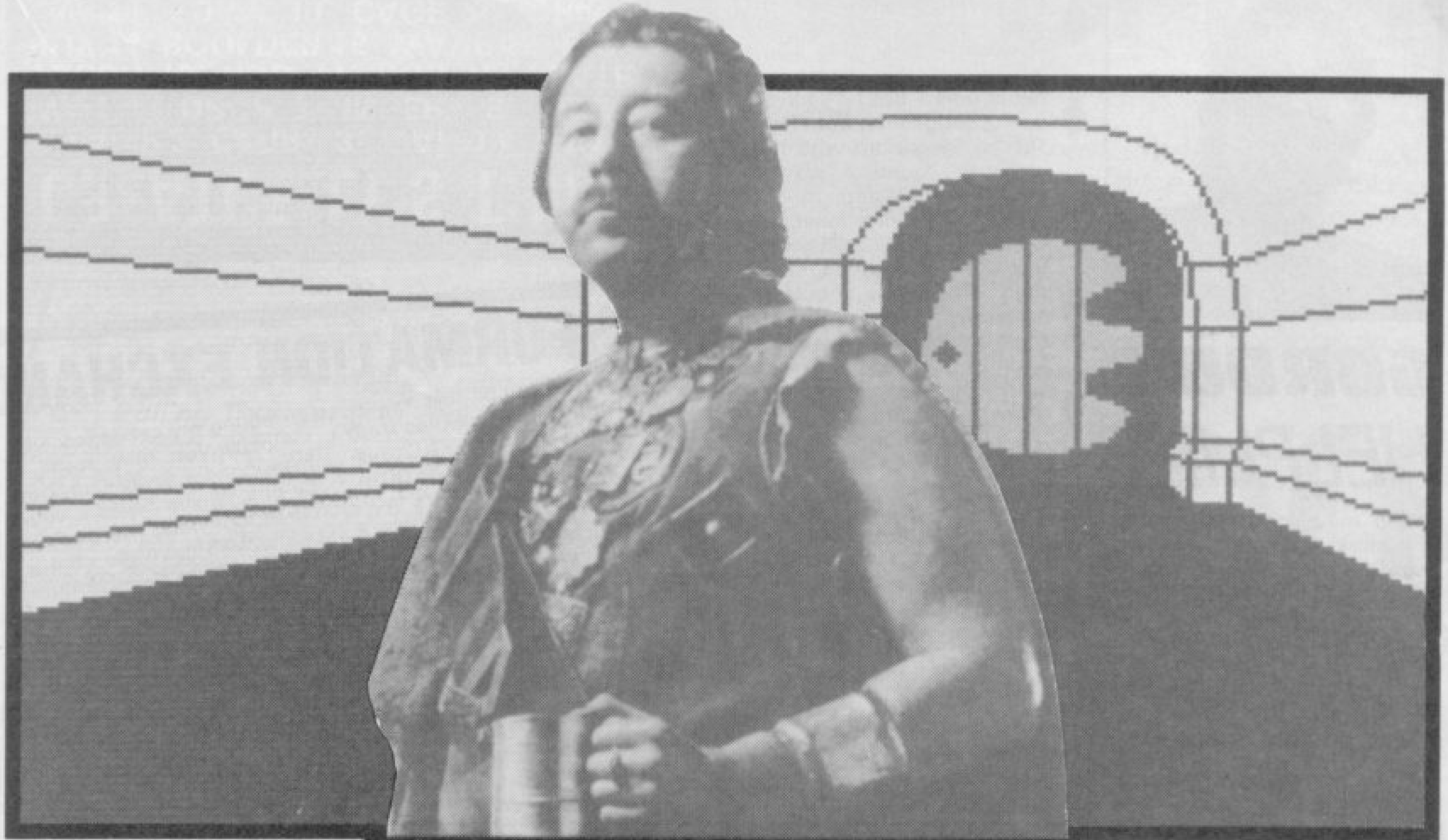
has revised and updated the Saga word-processor **Last Word,** and this is Tasman's major competition in the +3 serious software market. Again, this is a powerful package, with four screen resolutions, single-key formatting commands, good printer support, all the usual editing facilities, and the advantage of being if anything even more user-friendly than **Tasword.** Same price, though – £19.95.

US Gold

is up there with the front-runners. At £12.99, you have the choice of **World Class Leaderboard,** the tasty golf simulation, **Out Run,** the car-racing coin-op smash, **Gauntlet 2,** the sequel to **Gauntlet 1** (we know that, silly), and off-the-wall sports compilation **California Games.** For a massive £14.99, you can also indulge yourself in the original **Gauntlet,** fighter simulation **Ace of Aces,** the original **Leaderboard, Winter Games,** or the helicopter-spy epic **Infiltrator.** Not a bad selection, but again it would be nice to see some original titles.



On the whole, then, he said in a summing-up-at-the-end-of-an-article kind of way, things ain't bad but they could be better. Quite a few companies adopted a "we-don't-think-there's-enough-of-a-market-yet-but-we'll-wait-and-see" attitude, which is understandable in some ways, but annoying in others. So start demanding more floppy software now; disc users of the world unite!



GORDO'S HELPLINE

I shan't spend acres of the column extolling my own virtues this month but I have to admit I was surprised, not to say greatly conceited, to recieve a clip from the Irish Times – one of Ireland's biggest selling dailies, says Jim Kelleher of Dublin, who sent it in.

What do you do when you're stuck in a game, asks the Irish hack, "Kick the computer? Destroy the tape? Kick the cat? Not if Gordo's Helpline is at hand, you don't. Gordo is a sort of games agony aunt . . .' So far as I know nobody's ever described me before as a Claire Rayner or Marje Proops of the computer world. Is it a compliment? Should I sue? Perhaps it's just best to get on with soothing all your agonies my lovies.

So let's hit

Blizzard Pass

and the terrible agonies of Alison Cowper of Carlisle. "I have pages of maps and know exactly what to do except for the small task of getting the teleport spell out of the caves without actually using it to do so. I also can't get past the zombies."

First, many thanks to the Parker family who've sent me a blow by blow solution and also to Adrian Moody of Newark who's provided me with a comprehensive hint sheet. Me, I've still not had a chance to play it through, so I'll rely on these wonderful folk for this month's answers. Not finding any direct mention of zombies I've decided to provide a set of tips on rubbing out monsters and also, hopefully, how to get out of the caves without having to teleport. First, the Ghoul. This can be attacked and destroyed with the sword. When the deed is done you'll then be able to examine the coffin and extract the power stone from it.

Now the Ogres at the guardroom and the Slime. If you can't get into the guardroom try 6,14 on the ogre. The slime is easily neutralised in time-honoured fashion by throwing soap at it. You can then pick the slime up along with a bucket and use it again to hurl at the giant. This allows you to get your hands on the harp.

The Yeti is also easily disposed of. Basically you have to create an avalanche and this can be done by yelling – that's the right word. The Teleport spell is used to get you out of the Temple and certainly is not the way to get out of the caves. If you've bumped off the wizard by hurling every spell you've got and using all the objects you've collected you should be able to make your way back to the Hall of Fire.

In the Hall you need to 9,3 to the pentacle and then 15,3 at the picture. go back to the window and go outside. Adrian Moody also adds that it's wise to pull the lever to lower the drawbridge so that you can use it later. Finally the guards – if you can't get past them make your way to where the Yeti is buried in the snow, dig him up and put on the skin. Be careful though, always go to the guards before digging the yeti up. If you don't he'll still be alive in the snow and he'll kill you.

Next, as promised, the third and final part of the solution to

Bored of the Rings

from Mark Thomas. The password for Part Three is 'Trevor and Derek'. Now "go east from the gully and take the platinum brick. Go S,E to the cliff. Say 'Hog' and a rope will appear. Take it and then tie it. Climb down, pull the rope and pick it up. When you see Goldbum give him the brick and then enter the marshlands. The path through the marsh is Nx2, SEx2, Nx2, E, S, Ex2, Ex2, N, W, N, Ex2. Pick up the sunglasses, put them on and return to the Basilisk by Wx2, S, E, S, Wx2. The Basilisk will turn cementish. Retrace your steps to the gates of Dormor but don't enter. S, E to the grey trees. N then continue E until you reach the stairs. Go up. E then throw the rope to swing across the fissure. S and W to Shelob's great treasure halls. E to the grassy path and E to the guntower. Go up and when you see the flying pig fire the gun.

D, W, D, E to the forge entrance. Enter them and take the large key. go back to the fissure and then swing. W, S and press the button to board the lift. Press the red button and leave. Unlock the door and N to get the powerful debugger. Go to the lift and press the magenta button and leave. N, W to the silent road. From there go Sx2, W to the headless statue. W to the bar, enter and leave immediately. When you see the Kremlins come out, attack them and re-enter the bar to find the scissors. Go N to the shopping centre, W, S to the electrical dept. Cut the string on the box with the scissors, look and put the ring into the microwave and wait. The quest is now complete and the ring destroyed. Other tips? Wait around in the marshes or



GORDO'S HELPLINE

you may come across the basilisk. You must kill the pig before going into the forges. Stay well clear of the gates of Dormor, the Keep of the Nazal and the Black Tower."

Dare I say that that'll put an end to constant whingeing about **Bored**? I can say it as much as I like, but I doubt it. "I am gradually fighting my way through

Kentilla

but I've got stuck again," writes Neil Cooper. "I've managed to get past the Ward of Disintegration but can't proceed beyond the Idol. Also can you explain what the brass lamp is for and how I pick up the silver dagger? I examine the desk and it says that I can see it. But when I try to pick it up it replies 'I see no silver dagger'. Please help." Let's start with the lamp. When you collect it an examination should reveal that it was once the property of some geezer called Aladdin. This should give you a clue to its purpose, so 11,1. The resulting Jinni will come in pretty handy later on – further that you've go so far.

Now the Idol. Examining it should tell you about a small hole in its left shoulder. 7,10 and open the trapdoor. Now you can go down to examine the debris and take and open a bottle. It's at this point that the Jinni leaps to your aid and smashes open a door. The dagger problem has me a bit flummoxed. If you 'look in desk' you should be able to just 'take silver dagger' without any trouble. Are you sure you haven't actually got it when you get told it's not to be seen? Check your inventory.

A briefie now on

Rigels Revenge

With Paul Johnson of Nottingham asking "How do you get out of the net when you get captured in the suburbs." Regret we can't as yet give you the definitve answer – let's have some letters on this game my petits pois – but I do have a useful suggestion from Peter Tan of Singapore who has, at least, found a way to travel unmolested in this area. "In the first location," writes our Pete. "Just get the goggles and then wear them. The game should go smoothly from there on 'cos the first location is completely dark. To avoid being followed and captured in suburbia by the canibals, go into the sniper's room. Look under the bed and you'll find a dark shape. Push the bed twice and then get the shape. This is a stun gun with no power. Carry it when in suburbia and all will be well."

Peter also wants to know if there's a way to escape the net and also how to power up the gun. He'd like to start his own penfriends' club which he calls the Haven, and welcomes letters from adventurers and anyone else interested in the Spectrum – which is apparently a fairly rare machine in Singapore, as most people there seem to go for Apples or IBMs! Fat city. He'd also love to hear from machine code buffs and Basic geniuses. Contact him at Block 195, Kim Keat Ave, No 03-356 Singapore 1231, Republic of Singapore.

GREATBELLY'S THINGY

1: LAMP 2: CARRY 3: WAND 4: STAND 5: WAIT 6: DROP 7: INSERT 8: PLANK 9: TOUCH 10: ROD 11: RUB 12: PLATE 13: BUY 14: BOULDER 15: WAVE 16: DISK 17: LAY 18: FOAM 19: CAGE 20: DRINK 21: TIP

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Only a teensy bit this month, notably a heartfelt plea from D G W Griffiths of 74 Ormiston Grove, Shepherds Bush, London W12 0JS. He's written to this column before with tips on **Fairlight One** but is now becoming desperately desperate to find the solution to **Fairlight Two.** He's been in touch with The Edge who tell him they're sure it's been completed. So, if you know the full solution or even just a bit, why not drop him a line and discuss your problems by sharing what you know.

This also applies to the aforesaid Paul Johnson of 82 Portland Road. West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 6DL. He wants answers to both **Fairlight One** and **Two.** Get scribbling my cabbages.

Finally you may recall I mentioned a Swap Club run by one Wayne Stiles a coupla moons back. Margo Porteous, who gave the club a good write-up in Adventure Probe, has dropped me a line to say that Wayne has now dropped out of running the club. Fortunately one of the long-term members has taken over, namely Paul Avis of 49 Hewitt Road, Hamworthy, Poole, Dorset BH15 4QB. Margo says she's already made one swap with the new bloke and 'he seems just as reliable as Wayne was'. Write if you're interested.

Well, cheereby for now lovies. Agonisingly

Aunty Gordo

THE QUICKIES

CASTLE EERIE: Paul Johnson of Nottingham asks how to get up the stairs manned by a guard. 5 on the landing until the guard leaves. A few other tips? Read the book to find out about a secret route and 17,8 to get to the Circular Room beyond the rotten floorboards.

SERFS TALE: Wayne Barrow, Doncaster, wants to know what to do "when I've got the cage from inside the gate." 2,19 and open it. Now you must catch the bird and go to the snake. If you release the bird the snake will disappear. This is pretty similar to the problem in the original **Adventure**, dim in the mists of adventuring antiquity.

SHIPWRECK: Also Paul Johnson – "Can you tell me what to put the oil into so that I can open the chest on the ship?" You may have a key but you do need oil from the ship's store to open the chest with it. If you 13,20 from the barman and then 21 him, you'll be given a bottle of beer. Open it and drink the beer. I hope this leaves you with a suitable receptacle for the oil.

MURAL: J T Jones of Neath squeaks, "I'm stuck in the penguin room – how can I get out and how can I get on?" Keep examining the books and eventually you'll find a small room. 4,12 will get you out of the bottom of a well and this will work both ways to get you back to the small room.

MATT LUCAS: Gregor McMurtrie, Edinburgh, "How do I get into Joe's place and what do you do with the disk found under the carpet in Herpinger's place?" These two questions are connected. Take the disk and return to your office. At the office computer 7,16 and you'll be provided with a map. It's this that will help you get into the club. The location directions won't let you enter but the map will show an entrance to the north. Once you're inside order a drink and ask for it to be put on the slate.

VALKYRIE 17: Roger Simmonds of Manchester wants to know how to get past the guards at Schloss Drakenfield – "I've got the diamond but the guards always get me." Once you've got the gem, killed the guard and taken his pass, go down and shoot the other guard through the glass door. If you've sprayed the 18 onto the video camera earlier on the guards will merely escort you out. If you didn't tell your mates where to send the flowers.

VELNORS LAIR: An oldie this one and a query from S Sanders of Blackpool – thanks for the solution to **Shadows of Mordor** Steve – he'd like to know how to get past the shark pool. To negotiate this you're going to need the trident from the Medusa cavern. If the cavern is a problem try using the mirror to do in Medusa. As to the sharks – use the trident before entering the pool.

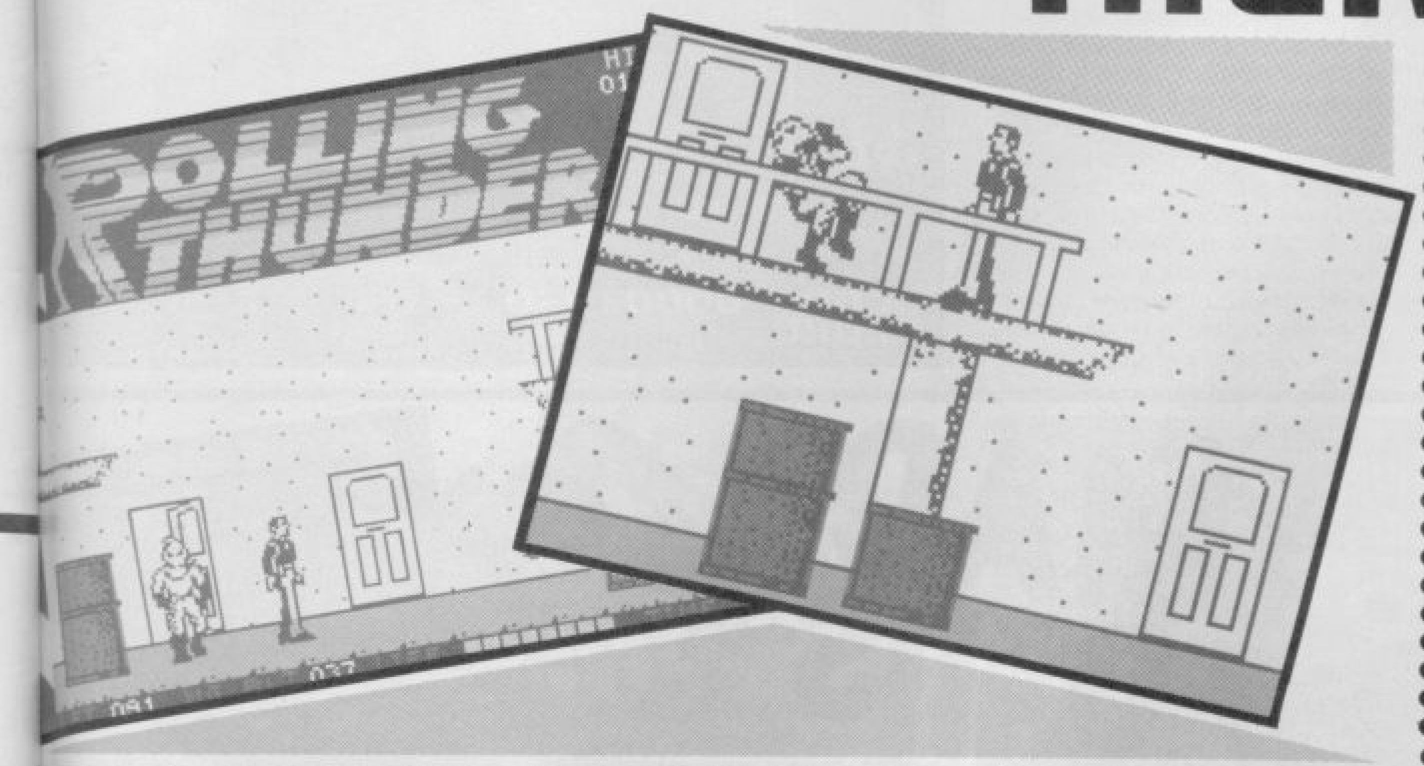
SMASH OFFER

ROLLING THUNDER

The time has come to don your bedclothes, to wear knee length suede boots, to wave your arms in the air in a strict 2/2 tempo, the time has come to be thoroughly nasty to all and sundry and to play ***Rolling Thunder*** *until your toes curl up, your eyeballs drop out and your index finger is really really sore.*

It's all very well, you might say, for us in our cosy offices to tell you to do that, but from whence do we get the dosh? We'll give your bleeding hearts a rest because we're gonna give you a quid off ***Rolling Thunder.***

Yup. Yet again SU *has come up with the goods at, um, a pretty, er, good price really. US Gold are being thoroughly generous, so now you can get a seriously cheap copy of* ***Rolling Thunder,*** *and anyone who buys another magazine, can't. It's as simple as that. Usual rules, cut out the coupon, send it, your name and address and an appropriate sum of money to the address on the coupon! What could be easier?*■



£1·00 OFF

SU SMASH OFFER

ROLLING THUNDER

Send this coupon, together with cheque/postal order for £7.99 made payable to US Gold, to Rolling Thunder Smash Offer, US Gold, Units 2/3 Holford Way, Birmingham B6 7AX. Don't forget to include your name and address. Offer closes February 29.

GARFIELD



Hu. If this is Monday, then I'm in one helluva bad mood. Come to think of it, I'm in one helluva bad mood whatever day of the week this is. I wanna kick something. Where's that dog?

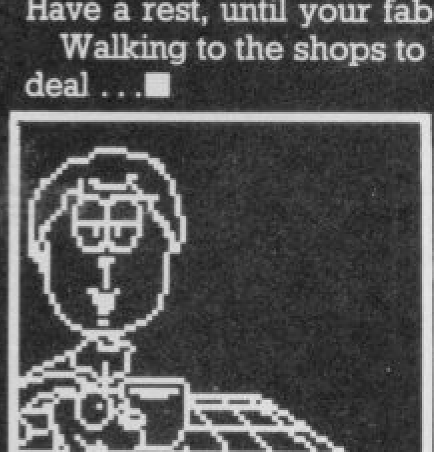
Now don't listen to what anyone else says. Exercise ain't good for you. So if you wanna buy the noo game starring yours trooly, you're in trouble. That walk to the shops is just gonna do you in. (And as for a jog – shove it). So what to do?

Well, if you're as cool as this cat, you're OK. 'Cos if you're reading this, you don't have to go nowhere. The guys at SU don't like exercises either. It's as much as they can do to eat a burger. So they're gonna give you this coupon and you can buy the game without moving a muscle. And at a cheaper price too.

So what you got to do is this. Cut out the money saving coupon. Send a cheque or postal order for £7.99 to the address below, and for God's sake, don't forget your own name and address, or you'll never get the goods.

Give the whole lot to someone really important like Nermal the Cutest Kitten in the World (Bleurrgh) and make him post it. Then get him to buy you lots of chocolate with the quid you've saved. And after that? Have a rest, until your fab **Garfield** game arrives.

Walking to the shops to buy a game? Big, fat, hairy deal . . .■



£1·00 OFF

SU SMASH OFFER

GARFIELD

Send coupon (and your name and address) to: Garfield Smash Offer, Softek International, 36/38 Southampton Street, London WC2 7HE, along with a cheque/postal order made payable to Softek International for £7.99. Offer closes February 29.

MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

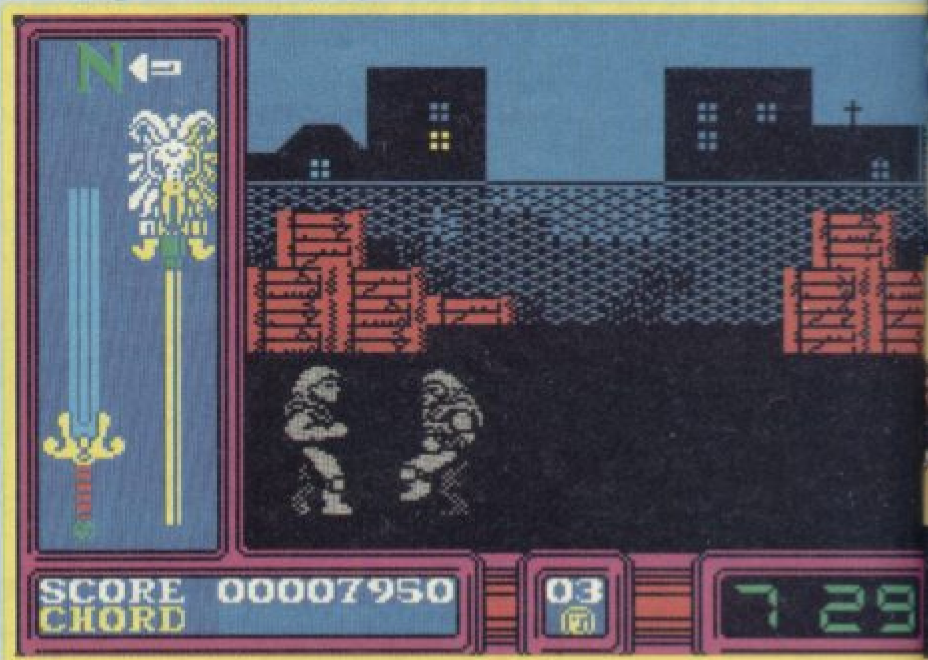
To date there have been two **He-Man** games, one an adventure and one an arcade game. Both have been only marginally successful, so when Gremlin announced they were releasing the third game on the exploits of he of the furry knickers, a murmer of "Oh no, not again" swept across the nation. "But," Gremlin insisted, "this one will be good. The plot is there for us already and surely the publicity of the movie will help us shift it." So they went ahead and wrote it, and I'm happy to say that the nation is wrong and the game is quite good.

The film itself follows the adventures of He Man, Teela and Gwildor as they fall through a Time gate (a portal to another world) and emerge in modern day California. Also fallen through the Time gate is the Cosmic Key itself, the key to time travel, and it has fallen into the hands of two unsuspecting college students. They are, of course, incredibly thick and accept the situation immediately as a walking skeleton with rippling muscles, a tall Russian/American body builder with a sword that is most likely illegal and hair extensions, and a horde of Darth Vader lookalikes just appear from nowhere.

The film builds up to the battle between He Man and Skeletor to gain control of the key. But on to the game.

You take the role of the mighty muscle himself, and must collect the 8 parts of the key, some of which are scattered about the city and the others are kept by Skeletor's henchmen. Whilst racing around the city collecting the musical chords that make up the key, you are contacted by one of your companions telling you to go somewhere. For example, first you have to go to a scrapyard where you engage in hand to hand combat with two henchmen and by defeating them your receive a chord. The next place you are sent to is Charlie's Music Store, where it's a shootout between you and seventy skeletons. After that it's a quick zoom over the rooftops in a flying disc and finally, if you have all 8 chords, it's a battle to the death with Skeletor.

The look of the game is first rate all the way through. To save memory, when in the streets, the screen scrolls vertically only. When you try to go sideways, the orientation of the screen changes. While confusing at first, you get used to it and before you know it you are using the free map included with the instructions to get around like it was second nature. The streets themselves



FACTS BOX

A multi-scrolling Bounder rip off with none of the charm. Though it's still a good game, it could have been better.

MADBALLS
Label: Ocean
Author: Steve Lamb
Price: £9.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Jim Douglas

★★★★☆
★★★☆☆ 7



MAD balls



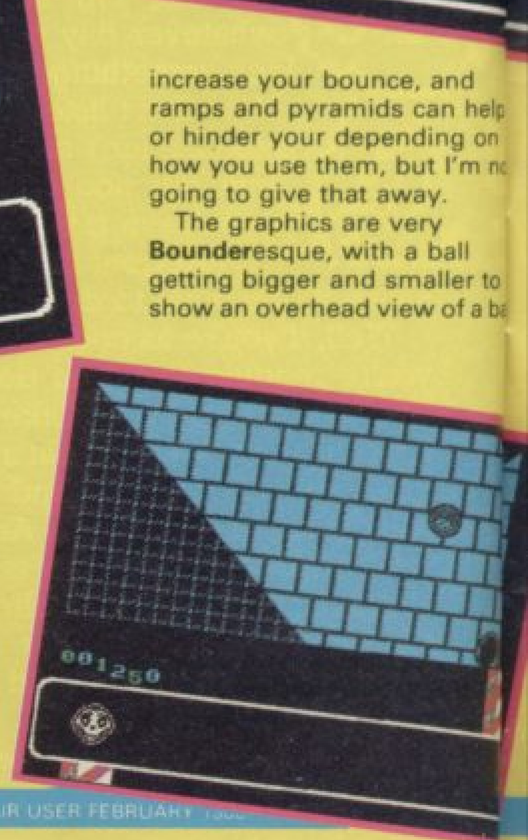




Madballs are these little tennis ball sized spheres that are incredibly ugly. In **Madballs**, the game, you are an ambitious Madball who wants to become the top Madball on the planet Orb by becoming leader of the gang of Madballs. You play a splendid little fellow by the name of Dust Head and he must travel about the various areas of Orb recruiting the different members for your gang. To recruit them, you have to gently let them know that you wish them to join. By gently, I mean you have to push them off the walkway you are currently on. Once they have graciously agreed to join, they appear in a little box under the main screen.

On the various levels are different balls. They range from the fast but weak Screamin Meemie to the slow but very strong Freeky Fullback. Some are very easy to recruit, some are damn difficult. But it's not just the Madballs that inhabit the peaceful (Eh?) land of Orb. The nasty officious Bureaucrats also roam the wold, and if you kill one of them, you'll score a lot of points. Once you have collected one or more balls, you can change between them by landing in an open dustbin. Also, as well as the dustbins, there are various other items scattered about. Things like trampolines and catapults increase your bounce, and ramps and pyramids can help or hinder your depending on how you use them, but I'm no going to give that away.

The graphics are very **Bounder**esque, with a ball getting bigger and smaller to show an overhead view of a ba







ARCADE REVIEW

FACTS BOX

A very playable conversion that captures all the atmosphere of the movie but falls on being a little on the easy side

MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE – THE MOVIE
Label: Gremlin
Author: Greg Holmes
Price: £7.99
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various
Reviewer: Tony Dillon

★★★★☆★★★☆☆ 7

are detailed, with pavements, sorry, sidewalks and buildings and there is even a grave yard complete with tombstones. The fight in the scrapyard in the second stage is beautifully done. The characters are large, clear and very, very recognisable. The animation is first class too, and unlike most side view combat games, you no longer duck to avoid a punch, you dodge, which results in He Man leaning to his left in a most realistic way. The two assailants are very different in appearance and forms of attack. One, the hairy one, will just walk into the attack, and the other one, the bald one, stands back and fires bolts at you. The third section, the shootout at Charlie's is not all that hot. In fact, it's pretty primitive. Just a stark building with a few emply windows forms the backdrop and tiny little robots jump up and down firing at you. You control a little crosshair and have to take out 70 of them before they take you out. The disc fight is set above the streets which are the same as before, only you are in a disc and move a hell of a lot faster than when you were on foot.

The game itself is an excellent conversion from the film and is fun for a while, but it is easy. Like the movie, you'd probably get bored with it unless you are a real **He Maniac**■



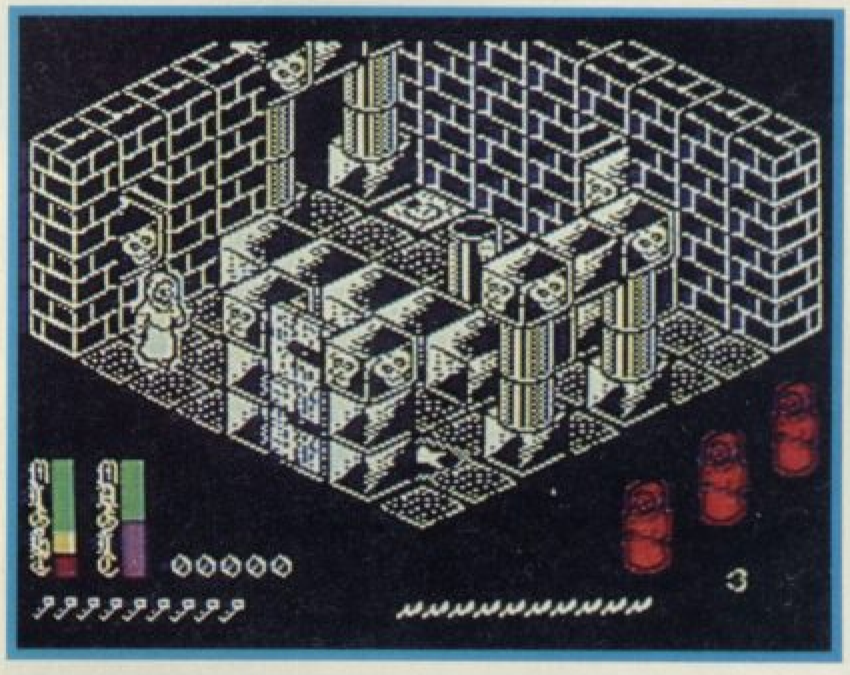
bouncing. At first the controls are very hard to master, and you find yourself bouncing off the edge of the walkway you are on via all manner of objects. Then you can start really getting into the game, which, though not earth shattering, is not all that bad. Admittedly, a bit more colour could have been used on the mostly monochrome playing area, the gameplay could have been a little easier to get to grips with, but still, it gets involving, and you soon find yourself egging your little on screen counterpart on with cries of "Go on" and "Get 'im". If you like games that need a bit of thought, buy this. If you just want a fast blast, maybe not■



WARLOCK

Why is the great Spectrum public always submitted to the endless torture of being good? Why can't they be baddies for once? What do you mean they can? Oh yes, that new game by the Edge, **Warlock**.

You play an evil Wizard who's castle of darkness has been attacked by those nasty forces of good. So, being the nasty type you are, you naturally go off into the deepest levels of this fortress of evil to wipe out the do-gooders. It's not bad enouth that they've invaded your privacy, they've taken all your best phantoms, and would you credit it? – they've turned them against you.



Warlock is yet another filmation flip-screen arcade adventure. Basically you have to find your Orb of Power which, oddly enough, is missing. Mostly you are wildly outnumbered by bad (good) guys, you are helped by having a choice of characters. Now, by finding a cylindrical thingy, you can change from the Wizard, through a thug with a club, to something which I can't really distinguish.

For the most part, the graphics are well defined – The Edge's games never look clumsy – and quite recognisable but in some cases they are too detailed for their size and end up looking a mess. The layout of the screens in general is messy and cluttered and for a lot of the time it is difficult to move around as you can't be clear whether there's a block in front of you or not. In any event the controls are sluggish and unresponsive. Even turning around seems to be impossible in some cases. The game also slows down dramatically when there is a lot on screen, and by a lot I mean more than three characters. The game also has an annoying glitch that makes you walk through doors that you don't want to. Altogether, not a fabbo game. In fact, it's not a good game. It's fair, but I have seen better■

FACTS BOX

In the ideas department, a step up from most filmation games but sadly, nearly everywhere else it's found wanting.

WARLOCK
Label: The Edge
Author: in-house
Price: £8.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various
Reviewer: Tony Dillon

★★☆☆☆★★☆☆☆ 4

THE HEART OF THE MACHINE

Andrew Hewson flags down a few paritys and explains how to cash in on registers

Why do you hardly ever print Irish letters? demands Michael O'Rielly of Dublin! Er, sorry Michael, it's because not enough Irish people write to me. Anyway, what I'm really writing about is to ask for an explanation of what registers do. Rodney Zaks' Z80 book in unobtainable in Ireland, so it's no good telling me to read up in there. What are Registers?

Registers are rather like variables in Basic. A computer doesn't alter the contents of memory directly when it is executing a machine-code program, rather it copies the contents of a location in memory into one of a number of special locations within the microprocessor called registers and then operates on the contents of the register. They differ from Basic variables in that they are limited in number and they exist within the processor itself and not in Ram. Also they only hold either one or two bytes, the latter in the case of a register pair.



The Z80A is a powerful microprocessor because it has several registers and so it can hold several numbers at once thereby reducing the need to make time-consuming transfers between the processor and memory. Most of the registers have one or more special features and half the problem in learning how to write in machine code is understanding the special features and mastering their use.

Accumulator Registers – a

The accumulator is the most important register because most of the arithmetic instructions, addition for example, and the logical instructions, eg logical *Or*, operate on the contents of this register. In fact it gains its name because the result of several successive operations accumulates in the *a* register. Some of the instructions which refer to the accumulator use a second register or a memory address as a source of data.

The Flag Register – f

Most of the registers occur in pairs in the sense that some instructions operate on two registers together. The *f* or flag register is paired with the *a* register in this sense although the link is rather tenuous because it is limited to the Push, Pop and Exchange instructions.

The *f* register is rather different from all the others because the eight individual bits in the register are used as so-called flags to record and control the sequence of program execution. Each flag is used to indicate that either one of two logically opposite events has occurred. For example the zero flag indicates whether the result of the last addition, subtraction, etc was zero. Only four of the eight flags are of interest to most users. These are summarised in Table 1.

The Sign flag is the simplest. By convention if a byte is being used to represent a signed number then bit seven is used to hold the sign, being set when the number is negative and reset otherwise. The sign flag reflects the sign of the last result.

The Zero flag is set if the result of the last operation is zero. It is also used by comparison instructions which are in effect subtraction instructions for which the result is discarded.

The Carry flag records the overflow which occurs if the result of an addition is too large to record in the register and if a 'borrow' occurs on subtraction. There are also some rotation instructions in which the bits in a register are rotated to the left or to the right with Bits 7 and 0 being rotated to or from the carry flag.

The Parity/Overflow flag is really two flags in one. It is used as an overflow flag by arithmetic instrucitons to indicate if Bit 7 has been affected by a carry or a borrow generated by Bit 6. It is therefore used to check if the sign bit has been corrupted. Logical instructions use the same flag to indicate the parity of the result. (The parity of a binary number is the number of bits set to one. If the number is even the parity is said to be even. If it is odd, the parity is said to be odd.) The flag is set if the parity of a result is even.

The effect of some instructions depends on the current setting of particular flags. For example the instruction:

```
jr z,d
```

causes the Z80A to jump over the next *d* instructions if the zero flag is set. If the zero flag is not set the processor executes the next instruction in sequence as usual. Thus the flag register is important because is allows the processor to make decisions and branch to another part of the program.

The Counting Registers – b and c

The *b* register and to some extend the *c* register with which it is paired is available for a number of purposes but its most important use is as a counter. We have already seen how the flow of a program can be controlled by the use of the zero flag in the *jr z,d* instruction. Another instruction:

```
djnz d
```

also uses the zero flag to allow loops to be constructed in machine code using *b* as a counter in an analogous fashion to *For-Next* loops in Basic.

When the instruction is encountered the Z80A decrements the contents of the *b* register, ie reduces the contents by one. If the result is zero then the next instruction in the sequence is executed. If the result is not zero the routine jumps *d* instrucitons. If the programmer uses a negative value for *d* the jump goes back earlier in the program and assuming there are no other

Flag	Mnemonic	Mnemonic when reset	Use
Sign	M	P	Set when the last result is negative
Zero	Z	NZ	Set when the last result is zero or a match occurred
Carry	C	NC	Set when the last result is too large to be fully recorded in one byte (or two bytes for operations on register pairs)
Parity/ Overflow	PE	PO	Parity – set when the last result had odd parity. Overflow – set when an operation changes bit seven as a result of an overflow from other bits

Table 1. The four flags which control most of the operations of the Z80A.

POETRY IN MOTION

Paul Hunter of Morcombe is having fun with his Spectrum. He writes: I recently saw a 'poetry' writing program on a friend's computer and I decided to write a similar program on my Spectrum, but I have two problems. First, how do I add a routine that makes sure that the words don't trail off the end of a line (ie: I want the words to start on a new line if the word will not fit in the end of the current line?) Secondly, how do I stop all the unwanted spaces in the text? I use dimensioned word arrays for all nouns, verbs, etc, so that if the word is not of the length of the array the computer prints lots of unnecessary spaces.

I have written before that, whilst Basic is a nice programming language to learn programming with, it isn't particularly efficient at handling many different problems. For example, it is clearly not very efficient at handling the kind of word structures which Paul Hunter is playing with. Paul is carefully storing all his words in a single array in order to save some programming effort. Thus he says the dimensions of the array have to be the same as the longest word. If the array is storing a shorter word, then unnecessary spaces appear when the shorter word is printed. This is clearly a problem.

It would be very helpful if Basic had some kind of formulation for variable length arrays. This would solve Paul's problem immediately. Unfortunately, it hasn't got this facility and Paul will have to do the hard work himself rather than having a language to do it for him.

Both problems involve determining the length of a word in the array. The easiest way to do this is to look for the blank characters which follow the word in the array. This is a rather messy solution and will slow the program down quite considerably, but it is the best that can be achieved in the circumstances.

N HELPLINE

branches, the processor will eventually encounter the same instruction again. Thus by loading the *b* register with a suitable value initially and setting the displacement, *d*, appropriately, a section of code can be executed a given number of times.

The *b* register holds one byte and so it can be set to any number between 0 and a maximum of 255. Hence at most 255 passes can be made through the same section of code using this mechanism.

The Address Registers de and hl

The *d* and *e* registers do not have any individual function and are mostly used as temporary, rapidly accessible memory. They may also be used together to hold the address of a location in memory which is currently of interest.

The main function of the *h* and *l* registers is together to hold the address of a location in memory. *h* stands for high byte and *l* stands for low byte and the address is held in the form:

address = 256*+*l*

giving a maximum of 65536 unique addresses (ie 0 to 65535 inclusive).

The Index Registers ix and iy

The *ix* and *iy* registers are each 16-bit registers and can only be used as such, in contrast to the *bc*, *de* and *hl* registers which we have met so far which can be used in pairs as 16-bit registers or individually as 8-bit registers. *ix* and *iy* are generally used in a similar fashion to the *hl* register pair although the instructions which drive them require one more byte of storage compared to the equivalent *hl* instructions.

For example

add hl,bc

is a one-byte instruction which causes the Z80A to add the contents of the *hl* and *bc* register pairs and leave the result in *hl*. The same instruction using *ix*, ie:

add ix,bc

is a two-byte instruction.

ix and *iy* have one further property which is not available to *hl* and that is that they can be used with a displacement, *d*. This means that an instruction which references *(ix + d)* does not use the memory location whose address is held in *ix*. Rather *d* is added to the value in *ix* to give a new address and the instruction then uses the corresponding memory location.

The Stack Pointer – sp

The stack is an area at or near the top of Ram which is used for the temporary storage of the contents of pairs of registers. It is designe to grown down the Ram as it is filled and to shrink back up the Ram as it is emptied. The bottom of the stack is fixed and, in the ZX Spectrum, it lies immediately below the location pointed to be the *RamTop* system variable. The top of the stack is below the bottom of the stack because it grows downwards and shrinks upwards. The address of the current location of the top of the stack is held in the *sp* register.

Transfers to and from the stack are made by means of *Push* and *Pop* instructions.

For example:

push hl

causes the procesor to: 1) decrement *sp*; 2) copy the contents of *h* to the location pointed to by *sp*; 3) decrement *sp*; 4) copy the contents of *l* to the location pointed to by *sp*.

The *Pop* instruction is the exact reverse. In this manner the most recent pair of values pushed on to the stack are always the values which are popped off again. This provides a simple and convenient method of storing the contents of registers temporarily, perhaps whilst a subroutine is called. Provided the register pairs are popped in the reverse order to that in which they were originally pushed, no problems will arise.

The Program Counter – pc

The program counter, *pc* is a very important 16-bit register because it holds the address in memory of the next instruction to be executed.

The normal flow of events when an instruction is executed is as follows: 1) Copy the contents of the location pointed to by *pc* into a special register within the processor; 2) If the instruction is held in several bytes, increment *pc* and copy the contents of the next location into a second special register; 3) Increment *pc* so that it points to the next instruction to be executed; 4) Execute the instruction which has just been copied in.

The Exchange Registers of af',bc',de',hl'

The Z80A possesses duplicates of each of the *a,b,c,d,e,h* and *l* registers. The duplicates are distinguished by the use of a prime, for example *a'* is the duplicate *a* register. No instructions operate on these duplicates directly but exchange instructions are available to swap two or more registers out of use and to bring their duplicates into use in their stead.

Exchange instructions are executed very rapidly, much more rapidly than *Push* and *Pop* instructions, for example. The contents are not physically copied from one register to the other. Rather a set of internal switches is changed to that the prime register is used by subsequent instructions and the original register becomes dormant.

TWILIGHT

VENOM

ADVENTURE Label: **Mastertronic** Price: **£1.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **various** Reviewer: **Tony Dillon**

A superficially attractive adventure with good design – but it lacks depth

At first glance, Venom looks like one of those Infocom adventures. You know, the ones that print their vocabulary up in the corner alongside the graphics. Venom is one of those adventures in which you play the part of someone with a funny name that ends in a vowel who has to travel across a land with another funny name that begins with a vowel with a friend who also has a funny name that ends with a vowel. At the bottom of the screen is a window which contains the room descriptions which are short and clear, but don't really tell you much. Above that is a scrolling window which tells you all the interesting stuff like where the exits are or what you can see, And, above that are two more windows. The graphics window and the word window. (I'll call it the word window because I'm too lazy and it's too late to keep typing the Vocabulary Window.) The graphics for the most part do give a good representation of where you are, and are clear and colourful. Up to this point, the adventure is wonderful.

The word window is where it all falls down. The game has a vocabulary of around 30 words, all accessible from the window via a joystick. No typing involved here. This may be a good idea for some 16-bit micros that can handle huge vocabularies, but for a game like this, it's just a waste of space and makes the game amazingly easy. ■

★★★★☆
★★★☆☆ **7**

MICROBALL

ARCADE Label: **Alternative Software** Price: **£1.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **various** Reviewer: **Jim Douglas**

Highly playable though ultimately unsatisfactory Pinball conversion. Not enough variety

I was never convinced of the virtues of pinball on a computer. I mean, it's all very well to convert an arcade game to the Spectrum, but the main attraction of pinball is the physical effect of the solid steel ball rumbling up and down the table and ricocheting off anything in the vicinity.

All the usual pinball features are included (there's even a tilt option) and the ball moves around smoothly enough to make the game playable. You can adjust the power of the initial 'pull' which sends the ball spinning, and there's a reasonable amount of skill needed if you're to get the right angle off your flipper. Another good point – four players can play in competition, with all scores displayed authentically to the left of the machine.

The most annoying thing is that there's only one table to play on. After a while you'll get to know the workings of the table inside and out, and it really wouldn't have been too tricky to incorporate a bit more variety.

★★★☆☆
★★★☆☆ **6**

EXCALIBUR

ADVENTURE Label: **Alternative Software** Price: **£1.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **none** Reviewer: **Jim Douglas**

Good budget adventure offering. Not exactly The Hobbit, but graphically pleasing and littered with interesting problems

Alternative Software is beginning to look like a name to be reckoned with. Excalibur, Sword of Kings (to give it its proper name) while not being the most astonishing game to appear recently by any means, is certainly well worth the price tag, and provides some thoughtful entertainment.

There are graphics throughout, and they're up to a reasonable standard. If there's a character in a location, he/she will be drawn instead of merely described. They're all recognisable and add lots of atmosphere.

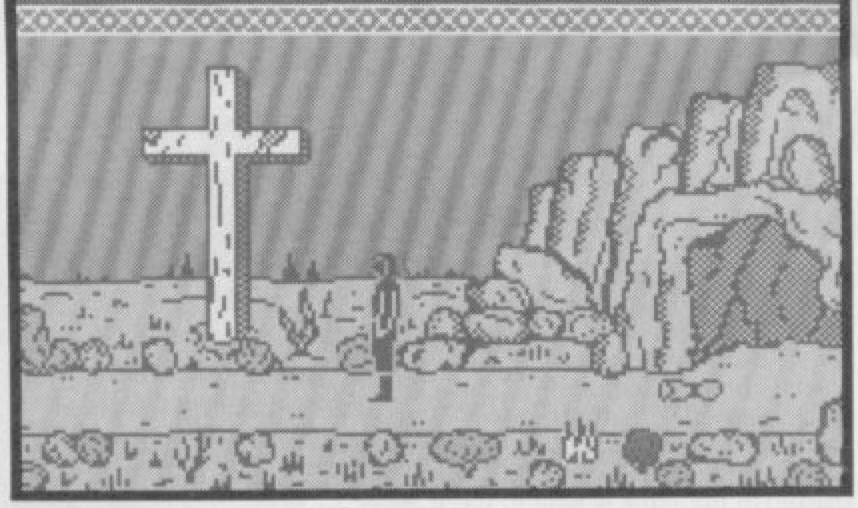
Vocab-wise, Excalibur is a bit on the basic side: when you're told that the roadside is "crowned with vibrant red hawthornes", you may well decide to try and examine them, which prompts the disconcertingly stupid reply, "What's a hawthornes?"

Excalibur is definitely a second-division adventure, but it's a competent one and great value for money■

★★★★☆
★★★★☆ **8**

ZONE

ADVENTURE REVIEW



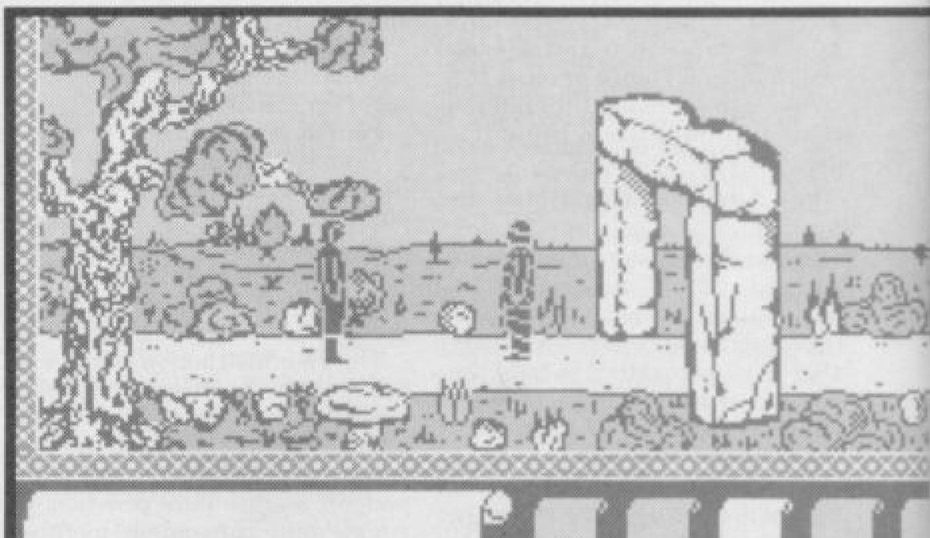
DRAGORIA

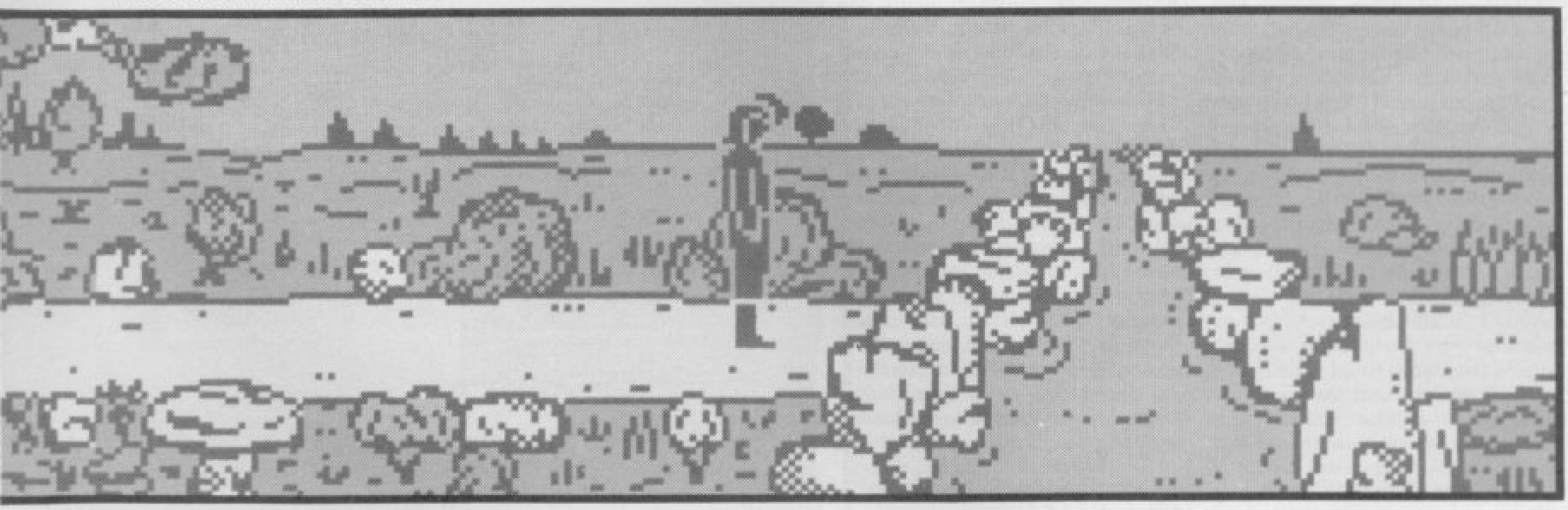
Pixie time again. (Cue moans of "Oh no, not the goblin's dungeon!") In fact **Dragonia**, despite having the most remarkably clichéd scenario, looks amazingly pretty and may well set new standards for combining graphic animation and the adventure form.

Vaguely comparable to Gargoyle epics such as **Tir Na Nog**, **Dragonia** is a multi-scene horizontally scrolling icon-pdriven adventure. The central character, Cebrenia, is not, despite all indications to the contrary, a skin disease, but an apprentice wizard. In an attempt to impress the grown-up wizards, he has set forth on a quest into the zombie-haunted land of **Dragonia**, armed with . . . absolutely nothing. No spellbook, no food, no weapons – not a sausage. The idea is to pick things up along the way; spells can be concocted by collecting scrolls, and examining them in a magic place, at which time their message will become clear. For instance, three scrolls combine together to create the spell FIRE ON THEE, which can be used to defeat a dragon.

Although in a sense the adventure is driven by verb-noun commands, most of the verbs can be selected from a scrolling menu at the bottom of the screen. Functions such as take, drop, put on, take off, speak, listen and so on will bring up appropriate messages in the scroll on the bottom left.

In the early stages, before you have assembled any spells, meeting a zombie will lead to inevitble death. The game map also seems quite complex; you can move in any of the four main compass directions, following paths. Lucky then that there's a Game *Save* option which allows you to save your position at any point. There's a time limit for the completion of Cebrenia's quest to find the lost crown, but while you are in command mode time is suspended, so you can use this as a pause. Excellent 128K mode music is another strong selling point.





The best thing about **Dragonia** is the background graphics, which are stunningly pretty. Bridges, houses, paths, forests and temples are all rendered in exquisite details. It's a pity that in comparison the characters are poor, vague figures, who tend to mince along rther than striding manfully or creeping creepishly.

Clearly more talented than your average small independent software house, Astros Productions has come up with something well worth a look here. Let's hope that **Dragonia**, or its successors, get wider distribution in the future. And cheaper too, please■



FACTS BOX

Some lovely backgrounds and complex gameplay make Dragonia stand out

DRAGONIA
Label: Astros, 34 Frieston Rd, Timperley, Manchester WA14 5AP
Author: Astros
Price: £11.95
Memory: 128K only
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Chris Jenkins

★★★★☆
★★★★☆ 8



ATF FLIGHT SIMULATOR

If you're sitting there thinking that Digital Integration produces nothing apart from intensely brainy simulations, think again. AIF has more excitement packed away in its code than most of the other overtly action-packed games could ever dream of possessing.

The idea behind the game is that the world is at war, and you're in control of an aircraft so powerful that you could tip the balance in the Allies' favour. By choosing which targets you wish to hit from a sche-



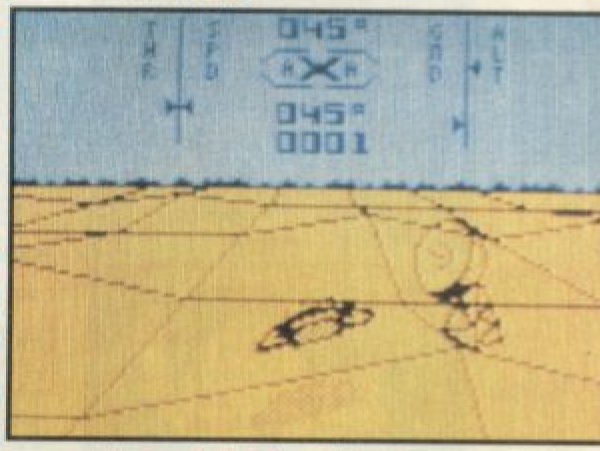
matic world map (factories, ships, tanks, radar tracking stations) you've got to win the war, single handed!

Yes, so what exactly, is the difference between AIF and the hundred-and-one other strategy games around? It's the speed, you see. Look at the main part of the screen. Now, you see all those lines and objects that you would expect to move around at about one jerk per second? Well, they all move at an astonishing 70 frames per second, which in real terms, mean that we're getting pretty damned close to arcade speed here.

And there are hills and valleys to swoop over, and, more interestingly, aliens to kill, radar stations to shoot and lots of other things to admire, all in fab 3D.

You can tool yourself up with an array of weapons and fuel, and what makes AIF so exciting is the way you can aim by simply flicking the joystick over the weapon desired and hold fire until you're sufficiently deadly. Indeed, the whole game is remarkably easy to get to grips with, and with the best graphics in ages, we can hardly wait to see it!

Streetdate: January
Price: £9.95



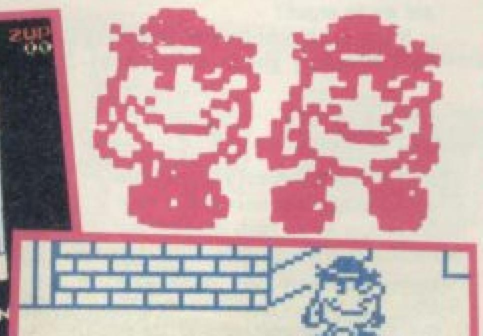
PACLAND

My My What a bizarre little game. Pacland, from Argus is a follow up to the Pacman games from absolutely ages ago.

As you will probably remember (or possibly not, as the game was so old) Pacman was a 'cute' yellow circle with a slit for a mouth and one eye who raced around a maze, eating dots and Power Pills which allowed him to eat the nasty ghosts which had previously been completely deadly (as opposed to a bit deadly).

Well, after the odd spin-off – Ms Pacman etc, which placed a stupid bow and eyelashes on Pac in order to appear feminine – Pacland came along, turning Pacman on his side, and placing him in his homeland with much the same objectives as the other games – eat and don't get eaten.





Now, I'm not sure that I believe this myself, so don't hold it against me. The plot (if plot it can be called) behind Pacman can roughly be explained thus. Pac has to help a lost fairy find her way home, across rugged mountains, dangerous ravines and dry deserts. Hindered by nasty enemies, Blinky, Pinky, Inky and Clyde (per-lease!) Pac must keep on eating the power pills and munching the fruit in order to get to the fairy safely. Once he's delivered the nice fairy to where she wants to go, the Queen will give him a smart pair of flying shoes, so he can get home more quickly. The game's only over when he's back, safe and sound with his family.

What tosh. I mean, do they expect us to fall for all that? Well, evidently they do, because Pacland is with us now, even as we speak, and as well as the plot being completely nancy-boy naff, the screen shots look quite dreadful too. So what have you got to say for yourselves? Quicksilva? Huum? We shall see what happens when we get the real version, won't we?

Streetdate: January
Price: £8.95



KARATE +

Gosh. Karate game time again. Yup, don your baggy jim-jams, tie your belt round your head, your tie round your waist and generally have trouble tying up your shoe laces. The time has come to emit strange foreign sounding cries again. Haii-yah!!

When you get a good game, do a sequel, so System 3 have given us the follow-up to International Karate, called, imaginatively enough, International karate +. Yes, I don't care about th ad copy blat says "call it a sequel and you'll end up on your back". This is a sequel, and that's that.

Very much the same sort of thing as the original, except that this time, the + is another opponent! Coo, tricky one eh? Talk about a menage a trois, the eternal triangle, the holy trinity and, and anything else that you can think of that come in threes. Lots and lots of pretty Oriental backgrounds, stuffed full of pagodas, whatever they are, Buddahs (well we all know about them) and chop suey. (OK, so I lied aobut the chop suey).

The whole thing looks rather spiffing as a couple of screen shots go, and it should be out any minute now.

Streetdate: January.
Price: £9.99



COVEN

Just in time for St Valentine's Day, comes a game about Halloween. It's a funny old world, innit?

Apparently there are thirteen witches covens in the world, and they all reach the height of their powers on all Hallows Eve. As a witch with a conscience, you must take over the power of the covens and make sure they don't take over the earth. You've only got the one night to do it though, and the race is on.

Now the really really interesting thing. *Coven*, whilst being programmed by Imagitec for Piranha was actually designed by John Gilbert! Yes, that John Gilbert, our very own John 'Nasty' Gilbert! So if any of you were wondering just what he was up to, now you know.

Coven is an arcade game, and, unsurprisingly, the whole thing takes place on broomsticks. Lots of spells to collect and magic to perform. Sounds fun? We'll reserve judgement until the game comes out, in June, but if you liked Palace's *Cauldron*, you could be pretty excited.

Streetdate: June.
Price: £9.99







SEPTEMBER

Wot? I could've sworn it was February, but no. According to Activision it's *September*. And who are we to argue?

It has to be said that what playing with numerous pieces of geometrically originated tiling on a piece of board has to do with what is probably the most boring month of the year is beyond me, but for whatever reason, *September* is the name of one of these 'cult' games.

Supposedly as challenging as chess and as exciting as – well, I can't think of many exciting board games in fact – *September* is all about trying to make a line from one side of the board to the other using T shapes, L shapes, straight bits and U turns.

Two players can take part (or you and the computer) and you start at right angles to each other on the board. The trick is working out how you can both further your progress across the board, and scupper your opponent's attempts to reach the other side.

Personally, I found the most interesting part of the board game was the way you could spend hours trying to work out what use the little '-' shape was for, when it didn't quite

NERNERNERNER...19



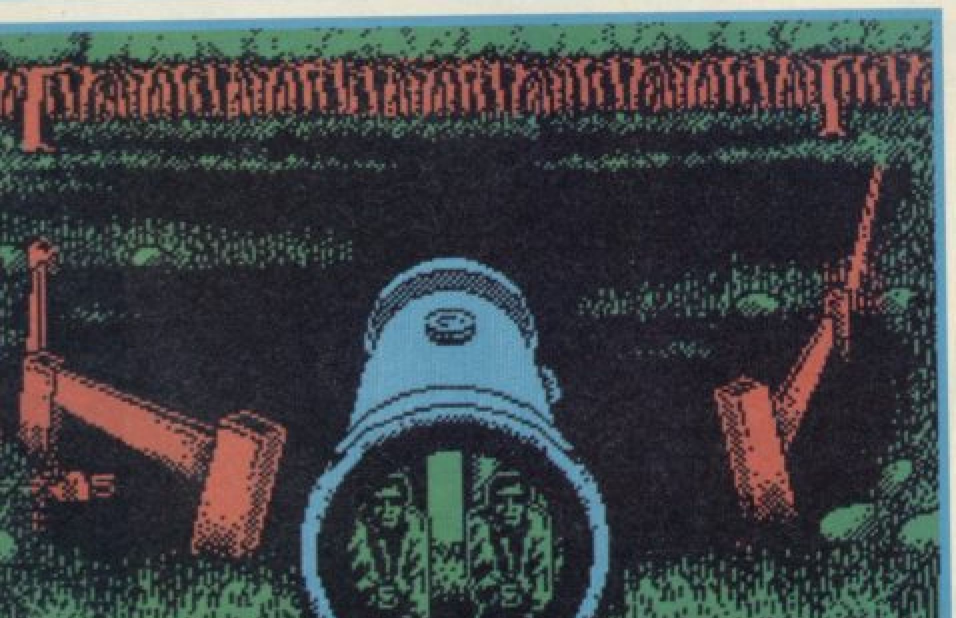
Phoar! What graphics! It's *19* from Cascade and it scrolls faster than anything else we've seen in ages! No. Not the whole thing, silly. Just the circular section in the telescopic sight.

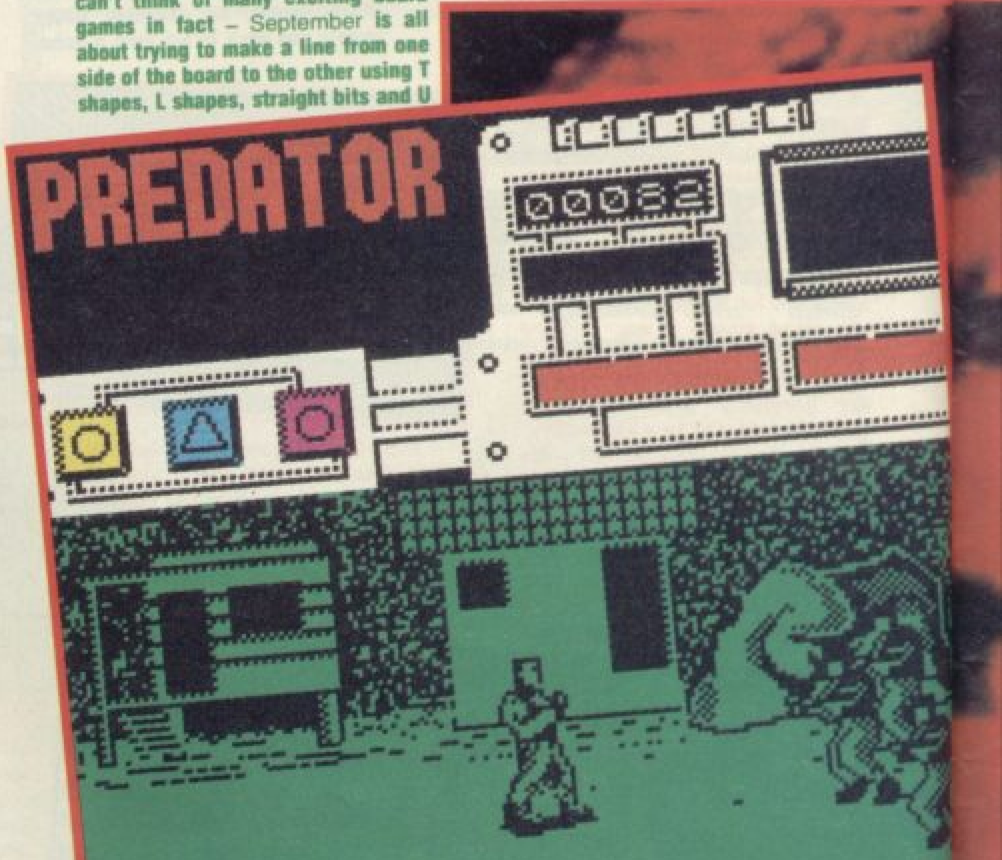
The section shown here is taken from the first part of the game (there are plans for three) on the firing range. The idea (in case you're very stupid) is to plug all the surly looking politically unsound paper targets and leave the nice wester mothers with babies unscathed. Your view can be scrolled across the horizon, and the targets pop up and fall down and so on and it's all very good.

For a bit more background information, check out last month's new story.

In the mean time, take our word for it that *19* could well be pretty amazing.

Streetdate: February.
Price: £9.95





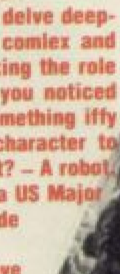
BUTCH PREDATOR

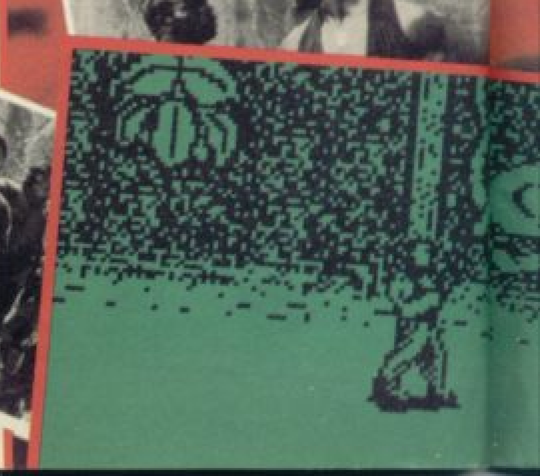
Muscle bound madcap marauding a-plenty in Activision's impending heavyweight, *Predator*.

Arnold S, continues to delve deeper into a wide array of comlex and sensitive characters, taking the role of Dutch Shaefer (have you noticed there's nearly always something iffy with the origin of his character to explain his wacky accent? – A robot, A German, A Barbarian) a US Major in the Mega-Nasty Brigade or something.

In the title role we have an extremely unpleasant looking alien who enjoys nothing more than a stroll









connect to any of the doits on the board.

And as for it being as challenging as chess, well, I remain unconvinced, but it should provide a reasonable amount of head-scratching, and you won't have to worry about losing that little crossy bit in the carpet.

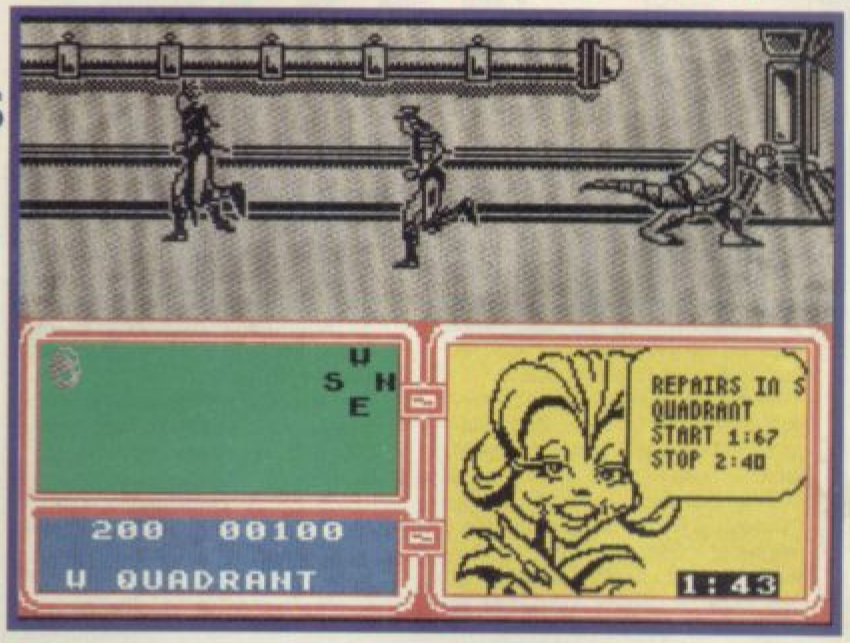
Streetdate: January.
Price: £9.99

HELLO TO HALO JONES

Halo, Halo Halo, what's all this then? A new game from Piranha based on a 2000AD character? A likely story.

Halo Jones, is has to be said, was one of the lesser-known characters of the comic. She didn't really have the instant appeal of, say, Judge Dredd, being more likely to spend her days in the launderette than blasting criminals with a handgun. HJ's appeal was in the representation of everyday life in an environment which was anything but mundane.

'The Hoop' is the unemployment centre of Mega City One. If you don't have a job, chances are you'll find yourself in The Hoop pretty soon. Halo Jones' main aim in life is simply to get to the shops and back in one piece. And – funnily enough – that's the aim of the game. You've got to get down to the general store and stock up with a month's supplies.



Finding your way around The Hoop can be a tricky business. As well as just walking left and right, you turn down corridors, ride along glidewalks and travel in escalators. It'll be easy to get completely lost and tumble into areas that you really don't want to go.

HJ is a pseudo-strategy game. To help you find your way around Swifty Frisco, an airhead female VeeJay, sits in the bottom corner of the screen, yakking away incessantly, occasionally giving out useful information about elevators or glidewalks being out of action. A dodgy glidewalk can be a positive boon. As they only run one way, you tend to get stuck on them, and end up stranded in the most awful places. If they're not working, you can just walk along them – no probs.

Of course, you're not alone on The Hoop, hundreds of people are walking about, as well as some very peculiar outcasts called Proxymen, why all have tails and nasty skin complaints.

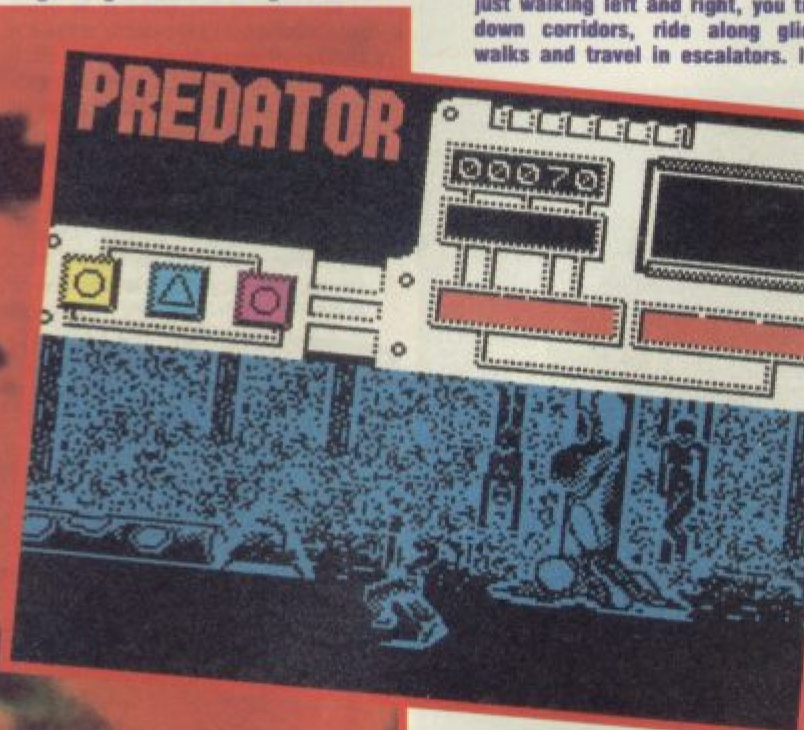
Halo Jones looks like it should turn out to be something like a cross between Tir Na Nog and Trantor – with any luck.

Streetdate: February.
Price: £8.95









around on a foreign planet, giving the natives a bit of stick.

And so, as Dutchey boy, you have to send the big critter back home with its tail slightly more tightly positioned between its legs than it would like.

Not that you start off with any intentions of entering into a scuffle. No. You toddled off into the jungle for a nice bit of R&R, and maybe a small bit of guerilla-bashing, only to find that your men are being topped in the most uncivilised manner by a big whoknowswhat.

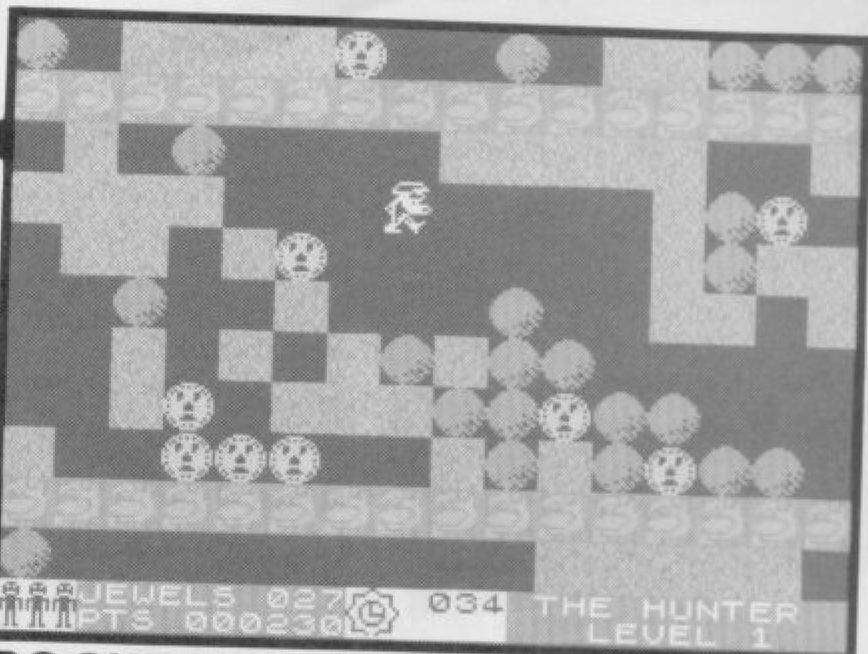
Graphically, it's a 2-D scrolly affair, and the incredibly muscley Dutch jogs around a foliage-infested landscape, shooting bad guys like there's no tomorrow. Should the alien get a fix on you, the screen will turn blue, and his triangular viewfinder will try to lock in on you. If it does, you're in big trouble.

And the game is likely to be exceedingly violent, too, as it follows the film's skirmish-like story quite closely (according to Activision). We'll be reviewing next issue, but in the meantime, take a look at the graphics.

Streetdate: January.
Price: £9.99

PREVIEW

PREVIEWS COMPILED BY JIM 'N' TAMMY



DISC APOCALYPSE NOW

Well stap me vitals, if it isn't a game that's only out on disc. Yup, after all the heart rending pleas of 'There's nothing on disc, what shall we do Oh Wise One,' here at last, is a game to please you.

Mega Apocalypse **did frightfully well when it was a mere Commodorian game, and it scooped dozens of awards, including one from a very dubious sounding mag called Happy Computer in West Germany. And now, owners of a swanky +3 will be able to play it. It's basically a blast 'em up and make 'em suffer a bit sort of game, and it should have you blistering your fire finger and spraining your waggle hand, it's that difficult.**

An impressive array of programmers worked on Mega Apocalypse. **(I don't understand, I thought an Apocalypse was final, how can you have less or more of an Apocalypse? Perhaps I'm just being stupid.** ***You're being stupid*** **– Jim). John** (Armageddon Man) **Wilson did the conversion, with graphics by Bob** (Pawn) **Stevenson and Malcolm** (Catch 23) **Smith. Coo! Worra lorra programmers! Not to mention a completely brilliant (so I'm told) Rob (everything under the sun) Hubbard soundtrack.**

Add to this brilliance of programming the brilliance of 360° rotational pods (ooh), collectable enhancing pods (aah), speed (eek), and the entire universe hurtling towards you in a not very friendly way (aaaoowww!) and you have a very fast and thoroughly impressive game. Say Martech. We shall see.

Streetdate: January.
Price: £8.99

ROCKFORD FILES IN

It's funny, isn't it, how an incredibly simple idea can be the basis for a game which delights millions.

Rockford, **shortly to appear on the new Mad X range from Mastertronic, was such a game, causing a ridiculous amount of fuss a couple of years ago.**

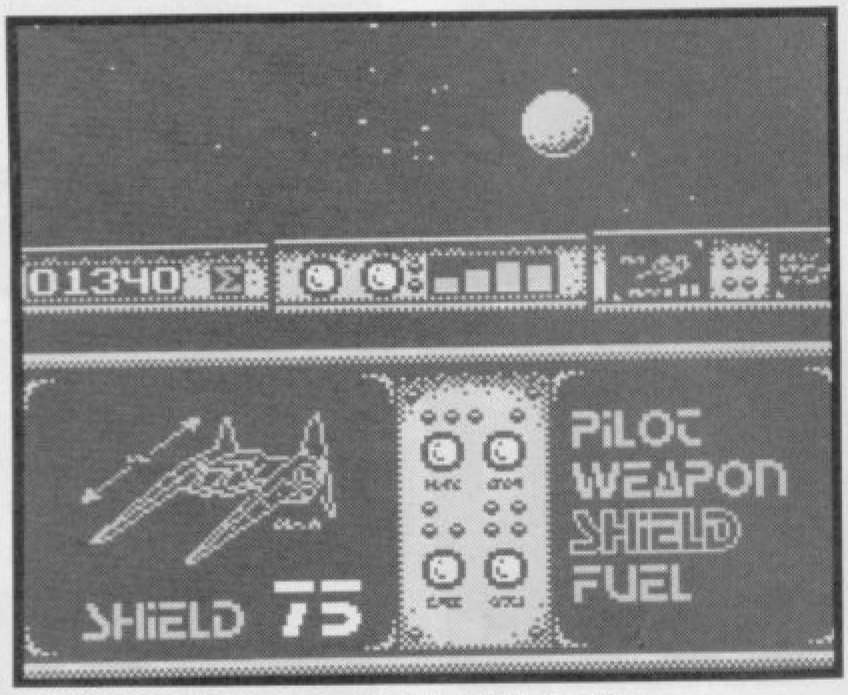
The idea of the game is to guide your character, Rockford, **around a number of maze levels, eating away earth and bonus coins and not getting squashed into a sticky mess by the enormous boulders which fall down on you if the earth beneath them is disturbed.**

As you can see, the graphics are not exactly flabbergasting. Indeed, my flabber has been gasted by many things, but Rockford **is not one of them.**

However, it's one of those culty things, and I'm sure you loved it and are wondering how to get hold of it etc, etc.

Well, it should be out any second now, and an interesting fact is that not only does the thing cost a ludicrous £2.99, but there's also another game on the B side of the tape! It's all part of M. Tronics new policy of value-for-money etc and they're going to be doing it with every single tape that costs £2.99 from now on. They're axing the old MAD label, and introducing Mad X in its place. X is for Extra – geddit?

Streetdate: January.
Price: £2.99





CASCADE OF ENEMIES

Cascade is being pretty nifty at the moment, impressing people left right and centre. And there's absolutely nothing to say that its next release won't do exactly the same.

Enemies **is a spooky little program, concerning a nice solar system overrun by marauding nasties, the** Enemies **of the title. Any road up, the whole point of the game is that you, the hero, have managed to escape the nasties by the skin of your teeth, and you're now out to rescue everyone else.**

The idea is that you liberate each planet in turn, and as you do so, you plunder all the wealth on that planet (it was yours in the first place though, so it's not really stealing) so that you can buy bigger and better weapons for your starship, you've guessed it, all the better to shoot the hell out of the Enemies **a bit more. Thus we have combined a very, very fast shooty-shoot with a sort of strategical element in knowing which bits to nick in order to buy the right weaponry. And, Cascade say, we get a whacky 128K enhanced game to boot!**

I'll buy that. The question is, will you?

Streetdate: April.
Price: £8.95

OOF! SMART OEUF!!

Couple of products on the way from Powerplay (who are Smart Egg Software in disguise). First up is A Harvesting Moon**, a game set in Moreton Manor, a curious old building with many an annex and ante-chamber to get yourself lost in.**

The storyline is reasonable: On a sightseeing tour of the manor, you become separated from your parents, and had better relocate them before teatime.



A Harvesting Moon **is a graphic adventure with good graphics and a fair plot, and when you remember that you get** Faerie **on the other side of the tape free (an admittedly low-rent affair) it can't be bad.**

Also on the way is HRH, **another adventure re-release, a "wacky" game which starts off by you receiving the Queen's giro cheque by accident. Funny old world, innit?**

Both games to appear shortly provide a New Year's stop-gap for starved adventurers.

Streetdate: January.
Price: £2.99 each

THE REALM

ADVENTURE REVIEW

The **Realm** would have been an easy program to review, if it hadn't been for the letter from the author which accompanied it. In said letter, said author explained his philosophy of adventure writing: as he sees it, the main problem with most adventures is that they make what in the real world are simple actions, like entering a house, into complex problems the solution of which depends on performing a number of differnt separate actions. This, he suggests, is frustrating, and he has avoided using such 'problems'.

With all that build up, I was expecting something rather special once I'd loaded up the actual program, which, like so many independent adventures, was written using **The Quill**, **Patch** or **Illustrator** – but, no . . .

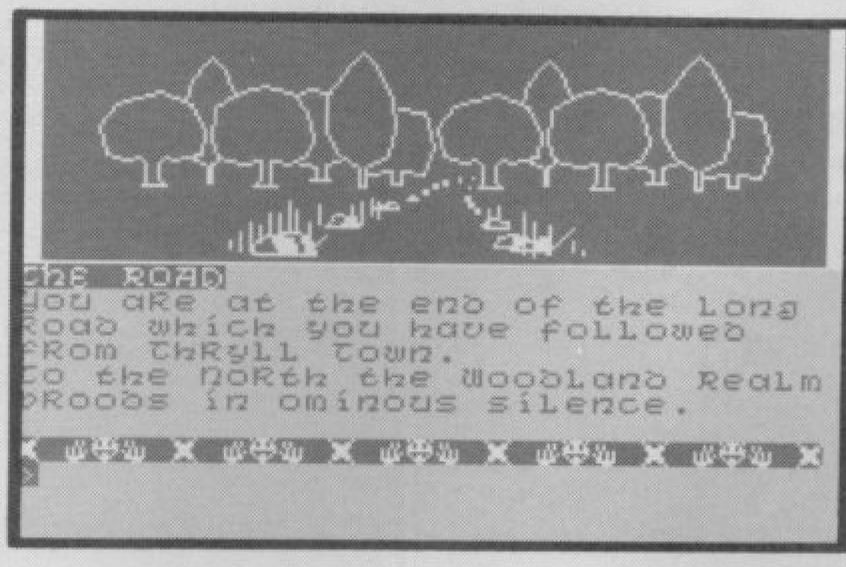
Although the game has over 50 locations, all of which feature split screen illustrations, the game is a bit dull, with a plot that tends to be a trifle on the simplistic side and graphics that look a bit crude. This is all a bit unfortunate, as I suspect that quite a lot of effort has gone into writing the adventure.

Wandering through the wilderness north of Thryll Town, the cassette insert tells you, you find yourselves in some wild woods, populated with the usual assortment of adventuring stereotypes – the wizard, the minstrel, the old crone and so on.

One of the main problems with it is that you are so limited in what you can do. A quick glance at the cassette inlay will show you that there are only 36 possible commands which you can use, apart from the magic words which you can pick up during the adventure. Eight of these are compass directions, and up, down, in and out make up another four. Five are program commands, like *Save* or *Load*. That only leaves 19 different words with which to solve all the problems of a 50 location adventure!

It's a bit annoying to find a house very close to the start location, and to have problems trying to get in! It's all very well to burble on about making things simple for people, but you can't get much more simple that *Enter* – and to constantly get the reply hocus pocus is a bit discombobulating. Actually, you can get simpler – the correct command is *In*. Similarly, if you want to get a room description again, then the standard L or *Look* are completely useless; only R – short for redescribe – will work.

The Realm is a decent, if unexciting, adventure program which is unlikely to appeal to experienced adventurers.



Either way I'm less than enthusiastic about the program on side two of the tape, **Boxing Manager**. If you like these management type games, then you might enjoy **Boxing Manager** – for a couple of hours. But there isn't really much to attract either serious sports fans or anyone looking for a challenging strategy game. You start with a boxer, who has ratings for strength, stamina and skill; you can hire a trainer to increase these ratings; the more a trainer can teach your lad, the more he costs to hire; you get more money by entering your fighter in contests which he wins; and that's it■

FACTS BOX

Decent if simplistic adventure with a very basic sports strategy game on the flip side

THE REALM/BOXING MANAGER
Label: Willsoft, 36 Walton Avenue, Windmill Lane, Sneinton, Nottingham NG3 2BS
Author: In-House
Price: £2.99
Memory: 48K

Reviewer: Gary Rook

★★★☆☆
★★★☆☆ **6**

The legend of the lost kingdom

Space Station B1

Another entry into the budget adventure market, but with a difference. Mr Nielsen and his adventures hail from Denmark.

You get two adventures on one tape for £2.99; **Space Station B1** and **The Legend of the Lost Kingdom**.

FACTS BOX

Two adventures on one tape from Denmark. Some language difficulties, interesting nonetheless

SPACE STATION B1/ LOST KINGDOM
Label: Dan B Nielsen, Tornskadevaenget 4, Snestrup, 5210 Odense NV, Denmark
Author: Dan Nielsen
Price: £2.99
Memory: 48K

Reviewer: Gary Rook

★★★★☆
★★★☆☆ **7**

Space Station B1 is set on a space station (ho humm). While the accompanying documentation was skimpy to say the least.

Anyway, it becomes fairly clear early on that you have to do something to the reactor, which has a nasty habit of blowing up and killing you. Wandering around the space station, you find the usual assorted objects which may or may not help you; keys, spacehelms, access cards. But I don't seem to be able to do a great deal.

The Legend of the Lost Kingdom is a much more satisfying adventure. Again, you start off with little idea of what you are supposed to be doing, but you find a very familiar object in the first location – the well filled oil lamp!

Wandering around, you will come across various sorts of terrain: mountains, grasslands, and old sumps filled with nasty water which it's all too easy to get drowned in!

Unfortunately, after a certain time, everything goes dark and you can't see a damn thing anymore. Since I have yet to find anything to light the lamp with, there's not a lot I can do . . . Added to the darkness you get little messages telling you how the zombie and the ghost have moved from their resting places . . .

Separately, the two adventures would be rather thin I suspect; together they make a good buy■



GREMLIN'S QUITE BIG GUIDE TO ZAPPER-SPEAK

What the Zapper says	What it means
I'll have a play but I'm not feeling well at the moment	*I'd better make up an excuse in case I'm really hopeless at the game*
That's funny I usually get at least 37,000 in this one without trying	*I usually play it with infinite lives*
I think there is something wrong with your joystick	*It's a lot more difficult when you don't play it on easy-peesy level*
No I don't fancy playing at the moment	*I'm absolutely hopeless at that game*
You wouldn't catch me using cheats!	*I don't know how to put them in*
I only play serious games like adventures	*I lack any kind of co-ordination whatsoever*
It gets boring after the second screen	*I've never got past the second screen*
It plays much better on the ST	*The Spectrum version was too difficult for me*
It doesn't look great but the gameplay is really good	*I've wasted my money on this junk but I don't want to feel stupid*
I'm hopeless at this game	*MEANS EITHER I'm brilliant at this game and I'm going to make you look stupid after lulling you into a false sense of security OR I'm hopeless at this game*
Where'd that green alien come from?	*I've been suckered again!*
It's not fair you can't see anything because of the attribute clash	*I'm completely hopeless at this game*
Oh don't let my sister play it she's just a girl	*She's so good at it we'll all look stupid*
I can't play this game without a joystick	*I can't play this game at all*
I expect you're used to a different kind of joystick	*You really are hopeless aren't you and I'm going to patronise you*
This bit's really difficult	*But not for me sucker!*
It's easy you collect the photon blasters, swoop over to the left avoiding the air mines, pull back hard on the stick to miss the enemy ships then engage the turbo boosters and head off at 90 degrees to miss the fire monster and get to the end of the first level with maximum bonus	*I bet you feel really stupid don't you*
Rock and Roll journalism is people who can't write talking to people who can't speak preparing articles for people who can't read.	*(Sorry this got in by mistake. This is supposed to be Zapper-speak Gareth not Zappa-speak dolt!).*

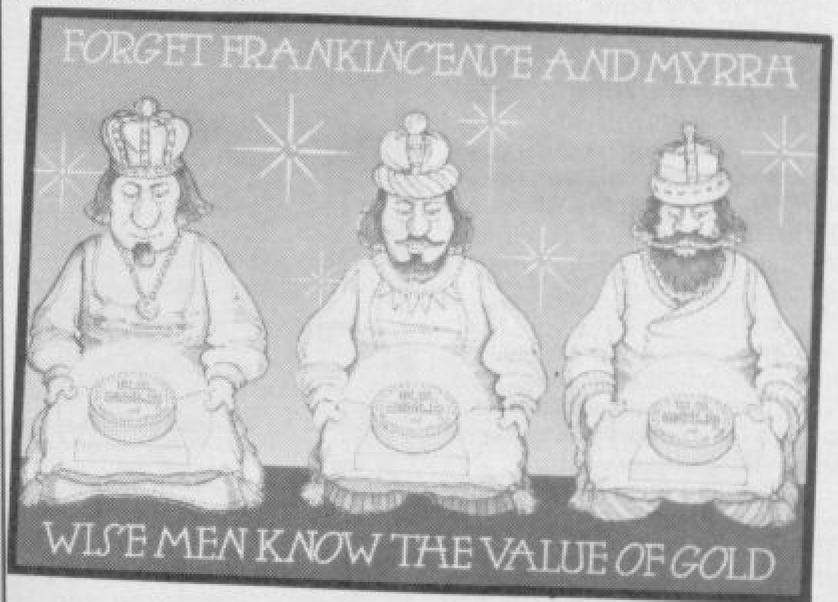
Highlights of 1988 (The Real One)

Gremlin has used special mystic powers* to bring you the results of the 1988 readers poll exactly one year ahead of time.

Best Arcade Game
Frogger
Best Adventure
The Hobbit
Best Licence Tie-In
The Wogan Game (Macsen)

Best Original Idea
Defender (everybody)
Best new Television Programme
Top of the Pops
Best new Fad
The skipping rope

*Gremlin's special mystic powers are sometimes a bit unreliable.



Ho Hum. Gremlin was pleased to receive a fair number of Christmas Cards from software houses this time around and was obviously very grateful for each and every one. The combination of Baby Jesus and space Battle Cruisers sometimes seems an odd mixture. Hi tech destruction and the son of God not necessarily being closely related concepts.

Of a large number of cards perhaps the least seasonal was this self congratulatory missive from US Gold. But the three wise Kings offering up the US Gold logo in reverence seemed a bit much to Gremlin even if it has put out some good stuff recently – could the idea be that Baby Jesus is going to play US Gold software? If so what computer does he have? Gremlin speculates that if its a +3 B.J. may be the only one not experiencing compatibility problems.

GREMLIN'S NOT VERY BIG STOLEN JOKE

Q. What do you call Postman Pat when he's unemployed?
A. Pat

GREMLIN'S IMAGINARY CONVERSATION BETWEEN TWO SLIGHTLY DEAF COMPUTER FANS

"What's that new computer then?"
"It's the new Spectrum Plus 2 A"
"The Plus 2 What?"
"A"
"Eh?"
"What?"
"Eh?"
"Eh?"

Last



GREMLIN'S LEAST FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS PRESENTS THAT WERE TAKEN STRAIGHT BACK TO THE SHOPS THE DAY AFTER BOXING DAY

1 Large chocolate Alan Sugar
2 The Greatest Hits of Richard Clayderman CD – but no CD player!
3 18 completely wonderful games for the Atari ST from an incredibly senile aunt
4 Sean Penn's Guide to Peaceful and Harmonious Living
5 A pair of boxer shorts covered in reindeer with glowing noses and the legend 'Speccy owners do it with red noses'
6 The Macsen Compilation. Containing all Gremlin's least favourite TV games, plus a bonus extended version of Eastenders
7 An Arnold Schwarzenegger 'Build Me-Up' doll, with exciting 'put-on' 'pull-off' muscles and plastic weights
8 Phil Spectre's Christmas Album
9 A third hand ZX80 without power supply
10 A fluffy 'disc-drive warmer' that fits snuggly over the hole where the discs go in your +3 and is just bound to get fluff in the works (from your senile aunt)

Highlights of 88 (Even More Real One No it is honestly).

Best Album
'I'm a nice boy really and I've very sorry' Prince and the Conservatives
Best Arcade Game
After Outrun Blaster II (US Gold)
Best Adventure Game
The Parser (Magnetic Scrolls)
(Runner-up *The Loading Screen* (Magnetic Scrolls)
Best Original Idea
Tiddlywinks (Macsen)
Best TV Show
The Poxy
Best Film
Unshaven American Teenagers join the Air Force (EMI)
Best New Band
The Puritans

Month's competition

Lots of loverly entries for last month's caption competition, marginally improved on recent months Gremlin feels. Despite dire warnings to the contrary quite a lot of people decided to be rude and smutty. Of these the most inventive and most possible to print here, (because those who might be offended probably won't understand it) is this caption from Henry Nelson of St Helens? "Dictaphone". Gremlin says no more except that it hasn't won.

The winner, for being topical, making use of the fact that one of the men looks like a space cadet, was this from J Harvey of Breaston, Derby, who suggests "Got through after 327 days – is cosmonaut Romanenko there please?" (Even a BT joke as well). J Harvey gets the lolly.

Gremlin

Caption Competition number 15



This time we have a picture that just threw itself into Gremlin's eager paws postively pleading to be the subject of a caption competition. A picture, so rich with possibilities that it does not bear thinking about, a picture that Gremlin hopes will produce some of the most astounding caption entries ever seen ever. So get thinking, think of the money (£20 on a crisp new but alas unsigned check) think of the fame. Think funny. Sexist entries will not win unless they are simultaneously an indictment of sexual stereotypes in society using biting satire. Closing date for the competition is March 1st. Yes we know it isn't very long, stop whinging.

Coupon

Name ....

Address ....

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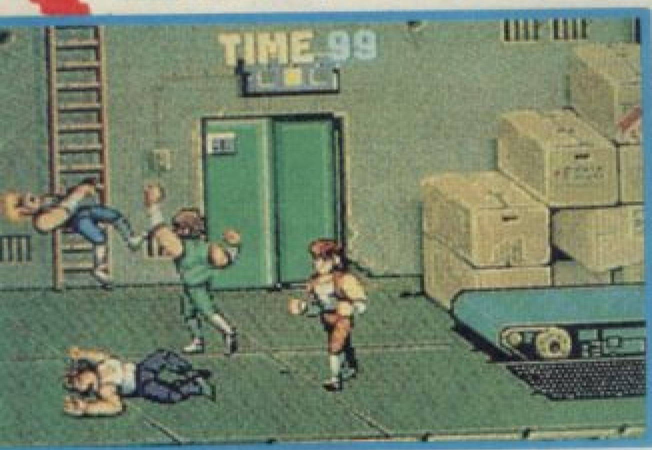
Caption ....

DOUBLE DRAGON

Jeremy Beckett, 13, from London was playing **Double Dragon** with his brother, Gregory, when SU confronted them in a West End arcade. Taito's **Double Dragon** has been immensely popular since its release earlier this year and, as a two-player game of martial arts, it is more fast moving and exciting than most of the competition ...

Jeremy and Gregory were depressingly good at the game and now have had so much practice that it takes them only half an hour to finish the entire game. It costs them a mere 30 pence each, though at the beginning they shovelled quite a bit more into the machine. When first getting into a game, Jeremy explains how to do it the cheap way. "I always watch other people playing first to see what's coming up."





Gregory's favourite arcade game is **Double Dragon** "because of the street fighting style, though it's much easier to get into than **Street Fighter**". Jeremy's favourite games are anything with punching and kicking and his most hated are shooting games like **Operation Wolf.**

HOT HINT: *"You'll use up least energy by using the elbow punches, and don't fight each other 'til you get to the end of the whole game."*

AFTER BURNER

Andrew Edney, 18, from London, was spending serious cash on **After Burner II.**

After Burner must be the most expensive shoot 'em up ever at about £1.00 a throw. It's a super fast roller coaster ride in a cockpit which chucks you about in four directions simultaneously. You control a supercharged jet and your brief is to clear the skies of all enemy aircraft.





OUT RUN

Paul Denham, 18, comes from Cheam in Surrey and I found him playing **Out Run.**

Out Run began a new style of racing game and comes in a huge sit-in model of a car kitted out with masses of chips and electronics which simulates accurately the movement of a real car as you skid round corners, run over bumpy roads, etc.

"The arcade game I like the most is **After Burner,**" says Paul. "It's got great graphics and the movement is really impressive. I don't like the old racing games like **Pole Position,** I think that **Out Run** has made it obsolete."





Paul's been playing arcade games since he was 11 and spends around £40.00 a month in the arcades. When asked why he went into arcades he got all philosophical, "Life ... colour ... to get away from it all." Very moody Paul.

Paul doesn't use a computer much at home and thinks games like **Indiana Jones** and **Gauntlet** are dull.

HOT HINT: *"Relax. You've got to have fast reflexes and good co-ordination."*

STREET FIGHTER

Dilip Patel, 19, is from London, and his favourite game is **Street Fighter.** It's in much the same vein as **Double Dragon,** though much more complex to play. The controls are numerous with several punch and kick buttons which when hit in different combinations give your fighter a comprehensive range of punches and kicks. Punch your way through a whole variety of opponents, each of which gets stronger and more cunning.

"**Street Fighter's** my favourite game because I'm into martial arts like Taikindo – which uses more kicking than punching. My least favourite game is **Xenophobe,** it's generally boring and I don't like the three-way split screen. I've now been playing arcade games since I bought a Spectrum in 1982 and probably go into an arcade about two or three times a month. Apart from seeing a friend who works there, I like going in to get new ideas."

Dilip owns an Oric, Spectrum 48 and Commodore 64. His favourite Spectrum game is **Eye Ball II** because "I like ball games", and his worst is **Magic Carpet.**





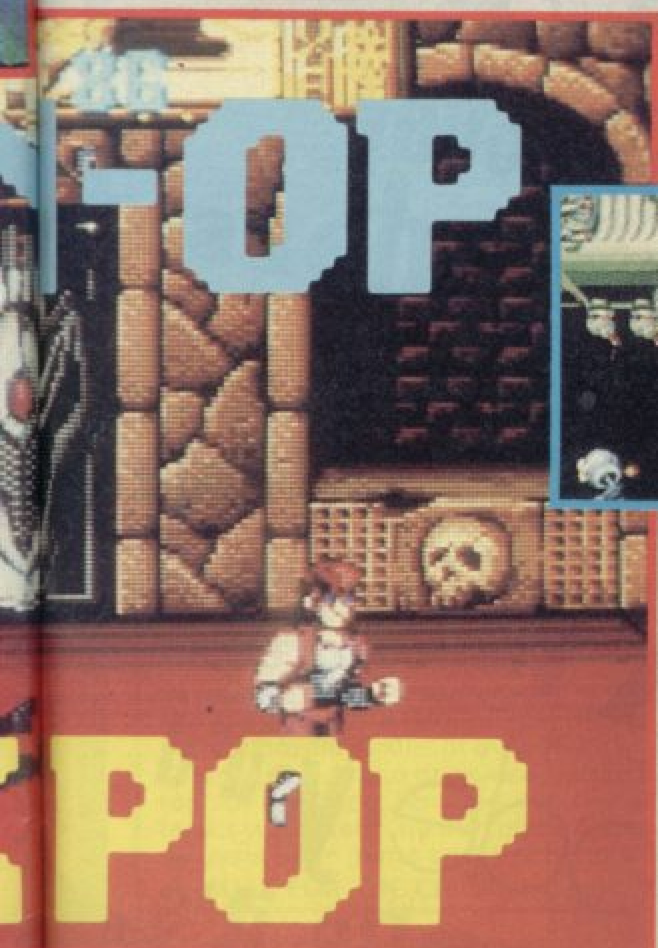
HOT HINTS: *"Use the fireball, spinning kick and punch – if you can do them decently, you can clear the whole game. Whether you use attacking or defensive moves depends on how your opponent plays the game."*



"My favourite arcade game," says Andrew, "is **Choplifter.** I just like helicopter games. But I think **Halley's Comet** is the worst. It's so boring, the graphics are bad and it lacks addictive quality." Andrew has been playing arcade games for four years and reckons it takes him about two hours solid playing before he can master a game. He goes into the arcades two to three times a month and spends around £3.00. At 10 pence a go on **Choplifter,** that's quite a few games.

When asked if he owns a computer, Andrew said, "Yes, I've had a Spectrum for four years, but this Christmas I got an Atari ST. I read Sinclair User, C&VG and Atari ST User." His favourite game on the Spectrum is Microprose's **Gunship. Match Day** is the game Andrew likes least.

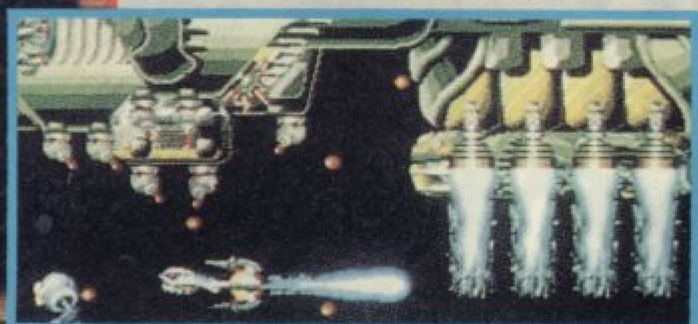
HOT HINT: *"Watch out for enemy planes flying up from behind."*



R-TYPE

Philip wong, 19, was blasting away at **R-Type** when SU met him and looked to be breaking records. **R-Type** is like **Nemesis** and **Salamander,** where you fly your ship from left to right blasting away at a multitude of aliens which zoom towards you in assorted formations. The pace is fast and the action non-stop.

Philip likes all the games in this genre – **Salamander, Nemesis** and **Darius.** Racing games like **Out Run, Wec Le Mans** and **Pole Position** leave him cold.



Many thanks too to Arcade in London's West End, especially to Family Leisure and Alan Rawlingson for helping write this article.



He's now been playing arcade games for about ten years and knows all the tricks. "If you see a game you like in lots of arcades then you can learn by watching other people." That way you don't spend so much on the game making mistakes. "**R-Type** took me about two or three weeks to know properly though there's no limit on what I'll spend if I like a game. I go into the arcades to waste some time."

HOT HINT: *"The only way to get through the game is to learn it and follow the proper routes. You must learn the firing patterns of the enemy and learn from your mistakes."*

1942

Philip Torimo, 22, was eagerly blasting away at **1942** in a manner which showed that he knows the game inside out, when SU accosted him.

1942 is another shoot 'em up where you control a plane flying vertically up the screen. The idea is just to survive long enough to blast all the enemy fighters off the map. Easier said than done, since they attack in large squadrons. The screen is filled with bullets, any one of which can cause terminal death. As the game progresses you pass over the ocean and try to take out massive aircraft carriers



and the like. Very fast and highly addictive.

Philip's favourite game is **Bombjack** because "I find it's got interest as well as challenge. I don't like **Super Sprint** – I'm no good at it." Philip visits an arcade about twice a week. "I only play between six to a dozen games because if you times that by 30 pence I find that I've put about four pints of beer's worth into the machine. The time you spend on a game differs, it depends how good I am, once I get a really good score I'll ?????"

Philip goes into the arcades to meet women from SU with silly questionnaires (so he was ???? ?? wasn't he).

HOT HINT: *"Drink three pints of beer and watch the enemy bullets, not your plane."*



NEMESIS

Nagib Meghji, 18, is a great **Nemesis** fan, in fact **Nemesis** is his favourite game. "I play it differently each time," he said, "as you can get further into the game when you use options like speed at different points in the game."

Nemesis, like **R-Type** is a fantastically fast shoot 'em up where you fly from left to right across the screen blasting non-stop at a huge variety of aliens. These come in all shapes and sizes, singly and in waves. On the way, you can equip your craft with ever more powerful defences.

Nagib reckons he spends about £5.00 to learn a game and prefers games with a





two player option. "I go into the arcades to see what's new and to play a few games with a friend."

Nagib's favourite computer games are **Nemesis** and **Frak** and his least favourite is surprise, surprise **Space Invaders!**

HOT HINT: *"I play it differently each time but use the extra speed to get through sections that seem impossible."*

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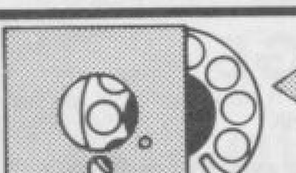
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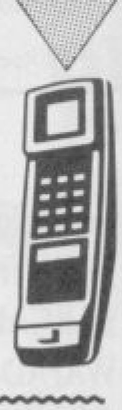
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